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Break the Chains! Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Revolution



The Women of La Costura

Go to any of America's gleaming shopping malls and you will find rack upon glittering rack of the latest in ready-to-wear apparel. Go to the stone-cold, gray, cracked and delapidated ten-story rat traps of downtown Los Angeles and you will see where much of it is made. *La costura* — the garment industry. It's the other side of the glitter — dank and musty halls with a lone 40-watt bulb (if it is working) creating shadows on the walls, sewing machines lined up claustrophobically in narrow rows, and air that is heavy with dust, stray threads and fabric bits. Although there are some men, it is mainly women who are breathing this mixture, using bathrooms that would best be described as breeding grounds, gulping down their 15-30 minute lunches while standing over a crud-embedded table top, bending over the machines 9-10 hours a day — and no talking, standing up or looking to the side

is allowed. There are an estimated 3,500 of these sweatshops in L.A., most run by petty contractors on behalf of million-dollar manufacturers for multi-million dollar retailers, adding up to an estimated \$3.5 billion for finance capital. It is the second largest garment industry in the U.S. (behind New York) and the fastest growing. And regular shoppers may have noticed that there has not been a marked increase in imported apparel over the past five years, despite the fact that a garment worker in South Korea, for example, makes about 55¢ a day. It would seem that the "domestic" garment industry is, as the financial experts like to put it, quite *competitive*. After all, the estimated 125,000 Los Angeles garment workers are almost *all* immigrants — and at least 9 out of 10 are classified "illegal."

If you ask a garment worker how much she makes, she usually answers, "the minimum — \$3.35 per hour." She is told

when she is hired that if anybody asks, that had better be her answer. In fact, "the minimum" is usually much less. Most shops operate on a piece-rate basis. An experienced operator with six years or so in the industry might exceed the equivalent of the minimum wage, perhaps reaching a whopping \$4 or \$4.50/hour if she's really fast, but she is a rare exception. The vast majority of the women in *la costura* are more like the one we met at a garment district bus stop. She has been sewing for four years, works nine hours a day, gets 51¢ for every jacket that she sews, and takes home \$114 per week.

But even this figure is deceiving. Most all of the women in the sweatshops have young children that must be cared for while they are at work. Unless there is an older woman living in the home, this invariably means trying desperately to find a babysitter that can be trusted. Accord-

ing to several women with whom the *RW* spoke, it is not uncommon for a garment worker, after childcare, bus fare and other work-related expenditures are subtracted, to end up with \$50 or less at the end of the week. On the other hand, this is better than "homework" — the alternative open to those who can't find a babysitter. Even if the piece rates are the same as in the shop (which is by no means a certainty), the skyrocketing electricity bills virtually insure that the net income will be the same or less. What's worse, these women are still *constantly* stuck in the home — isolated from each other and running back and forth from the kids to the sewing machine to the kitchen. Whatever the wages, the overwhelming majority of women who rely on "homework" do so only because they have no other way of taking care of the kids. However, in the late afternoon, the

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In the "Year of the Bible"

The Christian Case Against Women

See Centerfold

The Dissolution of In Struggle!

Dear Comrades,

As an overseas reader of the *Revolutionary Worker* who has witnessed first hand the tragic effects of the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Europe I felt the urge to send you some comments on the dissolution of the erstwhile Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada In Struggle! and to support the current fundraising campaign of the RCP, USA. What prompted me to write was accounts in the European press of the current political crisis in Quebec, the long time stronghold of In Struggle! (and, for that matter, the entire ML movement in Canada). Apparently the ruling political party in Quebec (Parti Québécois) has become more and more isolated from an important part of the very social base on which it rode to power a few years ago — the hundreds of thousands of Quebecois employed in the "public sector" ranging from teachers and so forth to more proletarian forces such as postal workers and street sweepers. The ruling PQ has adopted anti-strike legislation in an effort to ensure social peace in what has been a volatile section of the workforce and, according to the front page of *Le Monde*, talk is already circulating that this could well represent the beginning of a May 1968 for Quebec.

Of course, it is difficult from scattered press accounts to assess the actual depth of the crisis the PQ is facing and still less the extent of the revolutionary possibilities it might harbor. One fears that talk of a "May 68" is greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless the ferment among the masses and the crisis in the ruling circles seem real enough and certainly provide a good basis for carrying out all-round revolutionary work — if only there was an organized Marxist-Leninist force capable of entering the fray and leading the proletariat and revolutionary masses (of which there is no shortage in Quebec) to determine their real interests.

There was, once upon a time, a force in Canada which could have played such a role. In Struggle! had attracted hundreds of members and sympathizers (mainly from Quebec) who, to quote from a misplaced self-criticism of its former leader Charles Gagnon "cared about nothing but the revolution". The comrades of In Struggle! had established a weekly newspaper which, despite a number of problems, deserved the adjectives Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary. For a number of years In Struggle! consistently supported revolutionary struggle against imperialism and took an advanced position in the struggle against the "three worlds theory" which would effectively outlaw revolution in countries like Canada. Lastly, In Struggle! correctly stressed the international character of the proletarian revolution and called for the struggle to create a new International

— although it must be pointed out that these later accomplishments were all along muddled together with a number of centrist and opportunist conceptions which were to play a big role in their demise. (I would encourage the comrades to read — or reread as the case might be — two old but excellent articles from the RCP magazine *Revolution* on this subject — "Proletarian Internationalism, What It Is And How to Fight For It" (July, 1980) which polemicalizes with In Struggle! and another article on the Zimmerwald Movement (October-November, 1979) which indirectly criticizes In Struggle!'s centrism.)

Unfortunately In Struggle! was never able to establish a firm ideological footing when the coup d'état in China and the subsequent attacks by Enver Hoxha on Mao Tsetung Thought gave rise to the crisis in the international communist movement that we are still feeling today. By refusing (or being incapable) of defending Mao Tsetung and trying to establish themselves as the great mediator between Maoists and Hoxhaites In Struggle! cut out from under themselves the only possible basis for correctly summing up the history of the international communist movement and advancing forward. Their appraisal of Hoxha's scurrilous attack on Mao as "a positive contribution in the struggle against revisionism" made their attempts to disassociate themselves with his reactionary conclusions (Mao was never a Marxist-Leninist, ad nauseam) more than a little pathetic. Their refusal or inability to stand firm on basic principles gradually transformed their subsequent study and reexamination of the communist movement from an eclectic mish-mash, in which some correct observations (for example their criticism of the dissolution of the Comintern) were mingled with opportunist concessions to Hoxha (why did Mao "allow" the bourgeoisie in the Party?), into an orgy of social-democratic "reevaluation" (read, negation) of the entire international experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In Struggle!, which had prided itself on never having had a "two-line struggle" found itself reduced to a squabbling, faction-infested cabal with outright reformists occupying the center stage. To illustrate the ideological (and not organizational) reasons for In Struggle!'s dissolution it is worth noting that at the time of its final conference In Struggle! still had hundreds of organized members and organized sympathizers. Whereas often the dissolution of a political organization is the *coup de grace* of a handful of demoralized leaders abandoned by their members, In Struggle! was determined that their collective political suicide would be with a bang and not a

whimper and their final conference was full of fire and fury — over the cardinal question of how to dispose of their considerable financial assets.

Thus the international proletariat finds itself robbed of an advanced organized contingent in Canada exactly when possibilities exist for making important advances and — most importantly — preparing for bigger and decisive battles on the horizon. In fact the collapse of In Struggle! is linked with misunderstanding of the role of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard in preparing the decisive sections of the proletariat and revolutionary masses for the revolutionary onslaught. Their refusal to form a Marxist-Leninist party was less due to false modesty ("how can we declare ourselves the Party when we still haven't won over the advanced section of the proletariat") than to a social democratic conception of what a party should be. The fear of "usurping" the role of the working class became, objectively, an excuse for abandoning the responsibility of preparing and training the advanced workers and others to be revolutionary leaders.

And now that all is said and done and the assets duly divided, the hundreds of comrades previously of In Struggle! are in no position to play the role that they could and should be playing today. Even those few who are fighting to reestablish a genuine Marxist-Leninist trend in Canada find themselves in a position of starting almost from scratch.

The point is that having a genuine Marxist-Leninist party does make a difference — in fact it can make *all* the difference. One has only to look at the current miserable situation in Canada or in Europe to appreciate the major accomplishment of forging such a party in the U.S. — the RCP. For several years now many have been predicting the collapse of the RCP, USA believing its continued existence a result of the "backwardness" of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. — in other words, the communists in the U.S. have yet to reach the advanced world levels of demoralization and agnosticism. Certainly such "heights" are nothing to aspire to. On the contrary, the existence of an organization of professional revolutionaries, based on Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought with roots in the revolutionary section of the proletariat and other sections of the revolutionary masses is something to be cherished — and most of all preserved and strengthened and developed. All of this, I hope, helps illustrate the importance, also, of responding favorably to the RCP, USA's appeal for funds to help the Party continue to struggle for revolution in the U.S. and throughout the world.

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More Reflections and Sketches

Indian Fishing Rights — And Tell Us Again Who “Never Keeps a Treaty”

by Bob Avakian

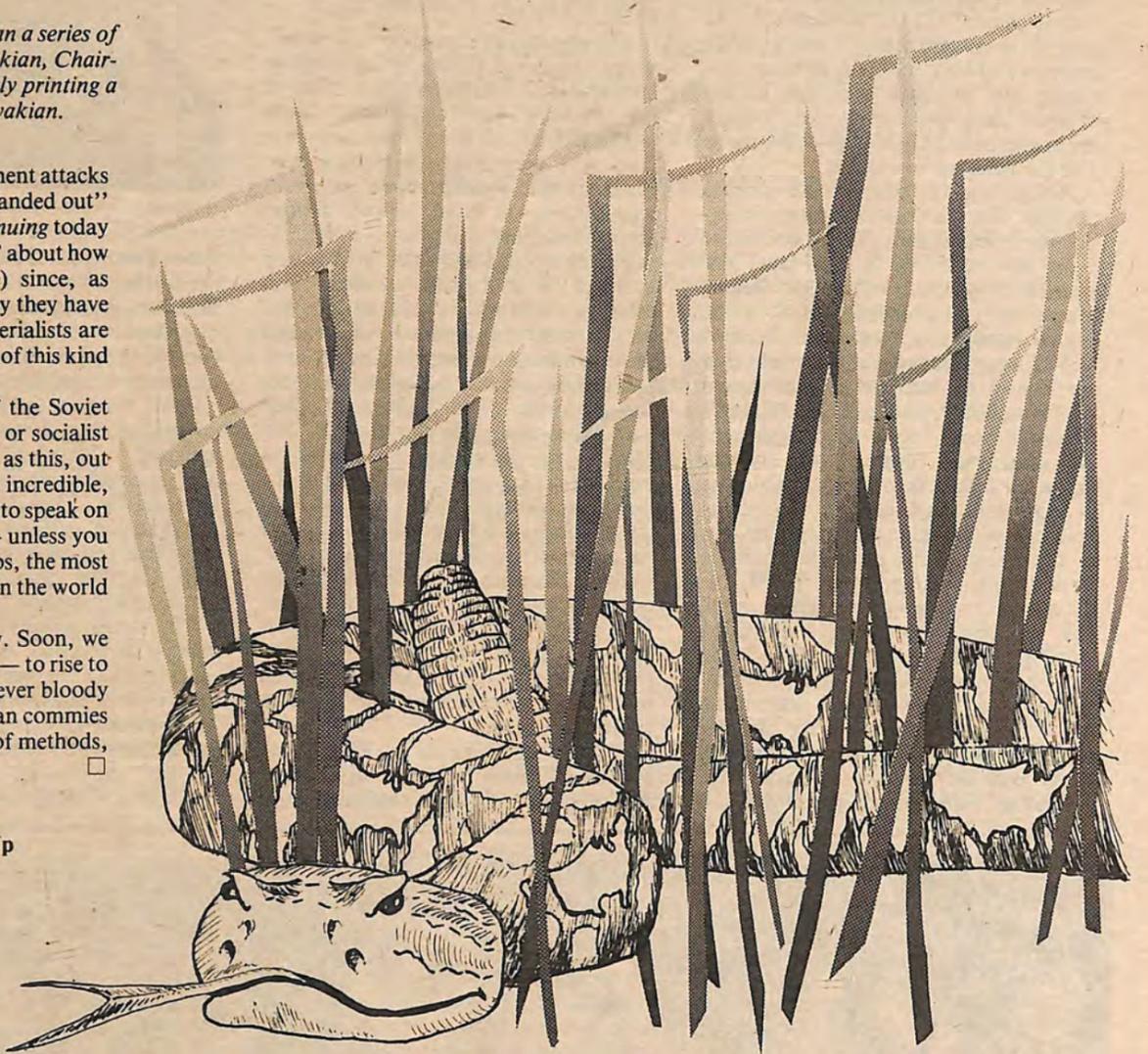
During the latter part of last year, the Revolutionary Worker ran a series of articles, Reflections and Sketches, edited from a tape by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA. We are currently printing a new series of articles, More Reflections and Sketches, by Bob Avakian.

The recent articles in the *RW* (nos. 182, 186 and 189) on government attacks on Indian fishing rights and the more general history of crimes “handed out” by the U.S. government to the Indians — crimes that are still continuing today — all this called to mind what used to be said during the “cold war” about how agreements with the Russians were worthless (or worth little) since, as everybody knows, “the communists have never kept a single treaty they have signed.” It was called to mind especially sharply because the imperialists are now reviving, through the mouth of Reagan and others, arguments of this kind as part of their preparation for a hot war.

Leaving aside the fact that, since Khrushchev, the leaders of the Soviet Union — and the Soviet Union itself — have not been communist or socialist but *social-imperialist*, what is most striking about statements such as this, out of the mouths of champions of the “American way” is the incredible, shameless gall! If ever there was a group of people who had no right to speak on the question of “not keeping treaties” it is the U.S. imperialists — unless you want to argue that they have the most right since they have, perhaps, the most consistent and longest record of violating treaties and agreements in the world today.

Well, no matter, there are more important things at stake now. Soon, we may all be called on and given the opportunity — even the Indians — to rise to the great challenge, on whatever bloody terrain and through whatever bloody means may be required, to meet and defeat those perfidious Russian commies who have never kept a treaty and who are out to steal by the vilest of methods, land and resources that are not rightfully theirs! □

NEXT WEEK: The Challenges Confronting Communist Stand-Up Comedians, or More on Hypocrisy



Pig Bullets Follow Taylor Funeral

On Sunday, February 27, family and friends gathered in Montgomery, Alabama to bury 68 year old Annie Bell Taylor. They had come from as far away as Pontiac, Michigan and Warren, Ohio. Shortly after the mourners returned to the Taylor family home and while some were still in their choir robes two plainclothes gun slingers of the Montgomery Police Department stormed into the house with their service revolvers blazing. But on this occasion the two men got a reception much different from what such thugs count on when they maraud through Black neighborhoods. The outraged family members gave the two cops a righteous thrashing. Hellbent on revenge local authorities have charged eight members of the Taylor family with attempted murder, kidnapping, and robbery.

Annie Bell Taylor and her husband had lived in the Madison Park area on the outskirts of Montgomery. They owned about eight acres of land off of Woodlawn Drive. In the last month Mr. Taylor had died after a long illness. At that time his sons Worrie and Elbert Taylor who live in Warren, Ohio and Willie Taylor Sr. who lives in Pontiac, Michigan came down to Montgomery to bury their father. Annie Bell Taylor was going to move up to Pontiac and live with her sons and grandchildren there. But she unexpectedly died three weeks after her husband. So for the second time in less than a month her children and grand-

children made the long trip south to bury a parent and settle her affairs. It was a sorrowful time for the Taylors and those who knew them said they were exhausted and emotionally drained.

After the funeral about 30 people gathered at the house off Woodlawn Drive. As people began to arrive, the driveway was filling up with cars, many with Michigan and Ohio license plates. Chris Taylor, 20 years old, Willie Sr.'s son went out to move one of his uncle's cars to make room in the driveway. It was a late model Lincoln with Ohio plates. Suddenly two white men came up behind him. They called to him, “Hey nigger, come over here.” Chris headed over in that direction. An argument quickly started up and that led to a scuffle. One of the men pulled a gun on Chris who started running up the driveway towards the house. The men began to run after him, opening fire as they all neared the house. A bullet from a .357 magnum winged Chris in the hand. Dripping blood from the wound he staggered into the house full of mourners and shouted to his family that two white men were chasing him with guns.

According to the police statement these two officers just happened to be out in this isolated area of Montgomery's Black community late Sunday night in pursuit of a missing persons report. As they were getting ready to leave the area, according to Police Lieutenant Wright, “Their attention was drawn to a man hanging

around a new looking car with Ohio plates that was parked in the area.” Now in the thinking of these night-riding thugs up to no good, the sight of a lot of late model cars with Ohio and Michigan plates in a Black neighborhood is indeed worthy of some attention. Like one of Chris's friends in Pontiac said, “When you go down South and you're from the North you're conspicuous. The police wonder what these ‘northern negroes’ are up to. They figure ‘you just can't come down here without us knowing what's going on.’”

A minute after Chris came running up, several bullets shattered the front door. Moments after this the door itself came crashing down under the two men who charged into the room with guns drawn. While such behavior is standard operating procedure for the pigs what happened next was definitely not on the pages of the police manuals. The men and women in the house overpowered the two invaders, smashed up their guns and proceeded to give them a righteous and richly deserved beating. Still not knowing the two were cops an aunt then telephoned the police to report the incident and summoned them to the scene. It was not until this point that the two identified themselves as officers Brown and Spivey of the Montgomery Police Department.

The Montgomery Police responded with full force! Reinforcements surrounded the house and fired into it. It was in this volley that one of the two cops in-

side was wounded as he bolted out the front door. Police quickly stormed the house when no fire was returned. According to Diane Taylor everyone was ordered to lie on the floor face down. Orders were issued to shoot to kill if anyone so much as moved including the six children in the house. The cops strutted around muttering, “she should have died a long time ago.” Then they began dragging people out of the door on their face and carting them off to jail. In the Montgomery Jail Willie Sr. and John Kennedy were brutally beaten. Taylor lost several teeth and Kennedy's whole face was swollen up. The beatings resounded throughout the jail for the benefit of the whole family which was kept within earshot. So far eight people have been charged with attempted murder, kidnapping and robbery. They are being held without bond in the Montgomery Jail. Police claim that some more relatives may have escaped from the house and they have issued warrants to arrest two more people — writing themselves a ticket for unlimited harassment and brutality against the Taylor family and who knows who else.

Not surprisingly the Montgomery Police Department has a much different account of their assault on the Taylor family and friends. And it is a story that reeks of obvious lies and racist slanders. According to Police Lieutenant Wright, the “investigators,” as he called pigs

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Indochinese Immigrants For Women, “Golden Mountain” is a Double Hell

Tran Ntoc is a Vietnamese refugee in her late 40s, living in a cramped apartment in San Francisco with several of her children. In Vietnam, her husband had left her for another woman, but they and the children had come to the U.S. together since it is easier for a unified family to immigrate. Today, the husband lives out of town with his second wife and comes “home” only on weekends to take part of the welfare money that the family receives and keep up the semblance of a family for the watchful eyes of the Welfare Department. She tries to make ends meet as best she can by doing piece-rate garment work at home.

According to one social worker familiar with the situation among the Indochinese immigrants, Tran Ntoc’s case is by no means an isolated one. For women refugees, the hell called “Golden Mountain” is a double hell. As the newest immigrants, they are at the bottom of American society; as women they are bound by heavy chains of feudal tradition. Many, like Tran, do “illegal” contract work for major garment manufacturers. Typically, a woman might sew 500 cuffs for shirts and blouses in a ten-hour day, earning 1-1/2 cents apiece — while taking care of the children in the house at the same time. In the Tenderloin, where over 7,000 Indochinese immigrants have settled in the past few years you can look down the alleys at the sides of many of the decaying apartments and hotels and spot industrial sewing machines positioned close to the windows to catch whatever meager sunlight there is. Although it is an open secret that the garment manufacturers depend on such contract piecemeal, the

“illegality” forces people to be wary and stay out of sight, intensifying the isolating nature of the work. Older women who cannot sew or who don’t have access to a machine roam the streets picking up empty aluminum cans from trash bins and gutters in exchange for cash. A good take for ten hours a day, seven days a week work amounts to about \$7.00.

The essence of the oppressive man/woman relations among the Indochinese immigrants is no different from that in the “civilized” and “enlightened” seedy porno district of San Francisco where they have been suddenly thrown into. Women are looked upon as mere reproducers of labor power, housekeepers, and pieces of meat — commodities to be bought and sold. But because most of the immigrants are from rural societies where feudal remnants are still very strong, the contradictions facing these women are that much more stark and stifling. Mien tribes people of Laos, for example, have transported their patriarchal clan society to the U.S. One Mien woman immigrant in her early 30s went to her clan council, where all of the family problems are taken up, to ask for a divorce from her husband who had left her and now runs around with a younger woman. The husband not only flaunts his new relationship but also takes the welfare money earmarked for their four-year-old daughter to spend on his girlfriend. Despite all this, the elders denied the woman’s request because the clan might “lose face.”

It is not uncommon to find young women of junior high and high school age whose parents, according to custom,



A Hmong woman in the San Francisco processing center for refugees from Thailand.

have already picked out a marriage partner for them. One Khmer high school student was targeted as a future bride by an older man — a reactionary who fought for the U.S. and is now involved in a movement to get Khmer to go back and “fight the communists.” Without consulting her daughter, the mother assented to his proposal and even told him he could move into their apartment immediately. The daughter, who has aspirations of perhaps becoming a nurse, is crushed and hates the prospect of marriage, but she cannot bring herself to stand up and oppose the decision.

The young women are caught up in a sharp contradiction. At home, they, even more so than the sons, suffocate under the weight of reactionary tradition. They are expected to marry early, become a good housewife and bear many children. At the same time, most of the Indochinese immigrant youth go to

“tough” schools like Mission and Balboa High where they run with Black, Chicano, Central American, Filipino and other youth from mainly the lower strata of the proletariat. For many Indochinese families, this is the first generation that is learning to read and write and is able to meet a wide variety of people outside the narrow confines of the family and home. Much more than with their mothers, there is both the basis and the rebellious spirit for these young women to break out of the hold of reactionary tradition. Ironically, even as the imperialists went on a rampage of murder, bombings and pillage to maintain the reactionary order in their neocolonies in Southeast Asia, they have created further conditions for the oppressed to rise up, including more fuller participation of women in the struggle to turn the old order upside down. □



A tapestry made in a textile mill in The Peoples Republic of China around 1974-75. This was the period of the campaign to criticize Confucius and Lin Biao.

Women and Revolution From the New Programme of the RCP

The following is taken from the RCP’s New Programme. It appears on page 78 in the section entitled “The Proletariat, Upon Seizing Power, Will Immediately Take up the Transformation of Society.”

The dominant social relations in this society perfectly mirror the economic relations—exploitative. Not only is there the general oppression of women, but even the working class man, infected with the dominant bourgeois ideology and frustrated with his role in capitalist society, often plays the role of the bourgeois in relation to his wife and children.

The proletarian revolution will change all that, through a prolonged process of struggle involving both men and women

and including the children.

Politically the proletariat will seek to unleash the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution. The seizure of power by the proletariat will require this and, as Lenin put it, a measure of the thoroughness (and thus success) of any revolution is the degree to which it mobilizes and emancipates women. Showing his awestruck terror at the powerful role of women in the historic Paris Commune of 1871, the first proletarian revolution, a bourgeois commentator of the time exclaimed, “If the French nation were a nation of women, what a terrible nation it would be.” This, the proletariat certainly cannot fail to grasp much more deeply than any bourgeois — and to act upon in

a way the bourgeoisie never can or would.

Upon coming to power, the proletariat will carry forward the struggle to break the chains which hold back women from a full role in society, and thereby hold back the proletariat itself from completely transforming society. There will be an immediate ban on discrimination of any kind, including against women, in work and pay as well as every other sphere in society, and at the same time special measures will be taken that take into account the particular problems — such as pregnancy — that affect working women. Birth control will be encouraged, thus combatting the tendency for unwanted pregnancy to force women who are struggling

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The Women of La Costura

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bus stops in the garment district are packed with women who, after working 9-10 hours in the sweatshop, are hauling home large plastic garbage bags filled with the night's activity. There are literally thousands of proletarian women who are forced to do both.

This is not a case of "extra" income; the whole family is desperately dependent on whatever these women can eke out. If there is a man in the home and he is also working, the woman's meager wages may mean the difference between living in an overcrowded, overpriced, typical barrio apartment, or one of the condemned skid-row type hotels that dot the downtown/MacArthur Park areas, and are periodically burnt down, leaving some dead and many others without any shelter. If, as is sometimes the case, she is the only one working in the family, the garment worker's income is the difference between eating and starvation. There is no other help offered. As one woman told us, "Even if you try to get food stamps, the first question they ask you is, 'Are you legal?'"

The precariousness of this existence for the immigrant family adds even more favorable fodder to capital's garment mills — teenage girls. Those we talked with hated the mere thought of working in the garment industry, and their mothers seconded that opinion. Yet, we heard stories of girls as young as 13 working at the beginner's jobs, like pinning buttons or collars, or pulling strings off the garments at rates of 1 or 2¢ per piece. One proletarian told us that if she took her 12-year-old daughter into the factory where she works, the contractor would hire her right away. With whole families living on the edge of starvation, somewhere close to half of the young immigrants from Mexico in L.A. drop out of school. For the young women, if they don't make it into the hated *la costura*, there is not much left to them. *La Opinión*, L.A.'s Spanish-language daily, is filled with ads for "hostesses" for L.A.'s numerous sleazy bars and clubs. Young girls are paid by the number of beers that men buy for them, or the number of dances they are asked for — and prostitution is just the next small step. One young woman told the *RW* about a friend of hers who became a "hostess" to earn enough money for a badly needed kidney operation; it was a death-race to see if she could drink enough beers to buy the operation before all the alcohol completely destroyed her diseased kidneys. Faced with such alternatives, many young women end up walking from sweatshop to sweatshop seeking work — and some told us that they must call around every morning to find out if there is any work available.

While there haven't been any new publicly announced Migra raids since last year's "Operation Jobs" reign of terror that shut down *la costura* for a full week, there have been a number of unpublicized sneak attacks designed to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear among the proletarians. One woman described the scene to us: Migra pigs seal off the front and back entrances to one of the buildings, and get on their bullhorns, blaring out orders to surrender. Some workers jump into trash barrels, big garment cartons, or behind the larger machines, looking for any place to hid, while those on the second or third floor look for some place to jump to the ground and get away. But those who are unable to escape are rounded up and sent to a detention camp near the Mexican border, and often kept there for months before being "processed" and deported. Meanwhile, the children are still being watched by the babysitter, who will hopefully take care of them until the mother and/or father are able to come back across and get them.

We asked some of the proletarians if life in the belly of the beast was what they had expected. One woman told us, "I thought it would be better. You always think it will be better. But even though me and my husband both work, we



Gate of a garment shop in the "La Costura" district of L.A.

sometimes still have to ask for credit at the grocery store or our kids will not eat — just like in Mexico." One youth, whose mother works in *la costura*, told us that before he came here, he had thought that everything was so cheap that it would be easier to buy new clothes than to wash the old ones; now, he thought it was just as bad — for a Latino — in the U.S. as in Latin America. But his mother thought it was worse here. "At first, it appears to be better, because you have a bathroom and maybe a car, but really, it's worse. Here, you have to work twice as hard. In my country, the women stayed home and watched the kids while the men worked. Here, the women have to do both."

The fact is that whether or not they operate sewing machines in their homes, there is no shortage of "homework" required for the women of *la costura*. And whether the man is working or not, it is nearly always the case that the job of cooking, cleaning and looking after the kids has "for women only" written all over it — in the husband's handwriting. That is bad enough, but the abuse doesn't necessarily stop there. Indeed, after taking shit from the contractor all day, coming home to its mirror image in the form of a petty tyrant husband often seems like going from the frying pan into the fire.

The *RW* was told about one woman whose story is in some ways typical. Her husband has had great difficulty getting work for the past year, and has spent more and more time drinking with his friends and relatives. Out of his frustration, he has also been giving her a lot more abuse. Despite the fact that she works in a sweatshop five days a week, she is also required to hire a babysitter since her husband refuses to do such "woman's work." Of course, the woman is also expected to do all the cooking and cleaning. She has had a somewhat easier time picking up English than her husband, and wants to go to night school to learn more — especially since she feels that one needs some English to deal with the conflicts with police, government officials, store owners, etc., that continually occur. But her husband opposes anything that would enable his chattel to even loosen the chains that bind her to his "castle" — a cockroach-infested match box in a condemned hotel that lets half the weather come inside its doors. He refuses to watch the kids while she goes to school.

Like a number of other women that we talked with, this proletarian felt that she could not talk to the *RW* unless it was "safe" — that is, unless her husband wasn't around and wouldn't find out. She feels trapped, finds herself wishing she hadn't had any kids — and then stops herself, saying that of course, she loves and cares very deeply for them, it's not

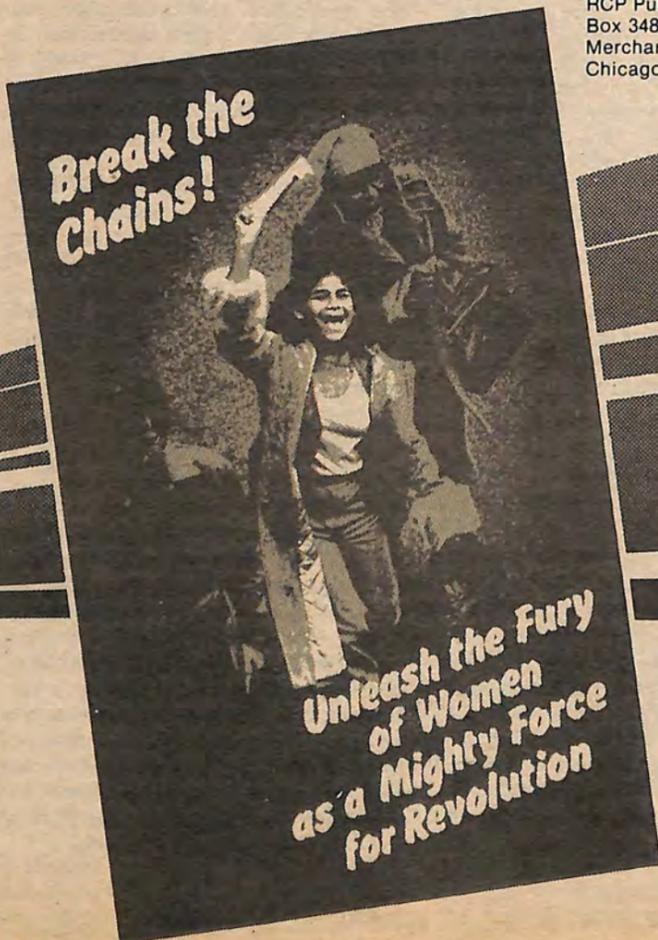
their fault. She makes a \$5 donation to the RCP Fund Drive — and implies that she would be in for a great deal of the blame if he were to find out.

While this "lord and master" is backward on many questions, such reactionary ideas and practice toward women are commonplace. Even those who consider themselves revolutionary-minded (and are... on some questions) often play similar roles. For example, a number of these proletarian women told us that they would like to read the *RW* and other revolutionary literature much more, and pay more attention to political questions like their husbands do, and they feel bad about the situation, blaming themselves for their low level of political activity; but

between the threats from the state, the work of the sweatshop and the stultifying relations in the home, they feel trapped and tired. These contradictions, which were discussed with us in *whispers* and in general are *not discussed at all*, are considered "private" matters — but they are socially created and of great concern to the proletariat. The philistinism in action and attitude of those male proletarians who act out the role of the bourgeoisie in the family needs to be brought into the light of day and combated. For there can be no obstacle left standing to the full participation in preparing for revolution of so potentially significant a force as the proletarians of *la costura*. □

Pamphlet by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

From speeches delivered at International Women's Day, 1979. And a solidarity message from the League of Fighting Women of Iran.
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On Cleaning the Dirty Laundry

Three excerpts follow. The first two are from a November 15 discussion in the Soviet publication, *Weekly*. They appear under the heading, "The Man At Home." Problems are posed, and yes, solutions offered!

The third excerpt is from "A Great Beginning," by Lenin (Collected Works, Vol. 29).

Husband or Lodger? (By Vladimir Voina) — ... In many families, the role of head is played by the woman. Little by little and before everyone's eyes, the functions of managing a household are passing to the weaker sex — or, to be more precise, to the former weaker sex. Today women play a very important role in society, and a quite decisive role in bringing up the rising generation. Be that as it may, it is women — and women only! — that one sees as kindergarten personnel; in teacher-training institutes and teachers' rooms, a man's face is a rarity. Girls are more ambitious, more disciplined and more studious. But the most important thing is the example of the family where the mother is in charge. So, it's hardly surprising that many young people who are starting out in life have no idea that a man should be strong, resolute and able to take decisive action or that he should be prepared to assume primary responsibility for the outcome of matters, for the fate of the family. That it's he who should be the main breadwinner. That it's he whose job it is to teach the children courage and an uncompromising attitude toward evil — in the same measure that the mother teaches them gentleness, tenderness, the ability to make concessions in little things, and, when it's necessary, to stand up in defense of something important.

A young man who since childhood has seen his father under the heel of a domineering woman may bring to his own family the idea that this is normal and so readily shirk all responsibility. This is how distorted and miserable relationships are reproduced. Should this tendency persist, we run the risk of bringing up effeminate boys. They will grow up to be meek compromisers....

It's somehow not the custom to talk about the biological and psychological differences between the sexes these days: Who knows, you may be accused of being against equal rights. But it's equal rights that I'm thinking about first and foremost. We should help women in all their laborious chores as often as possible. We should play a more important part in child-rearing. We have an obligation, as a rule, to earn more than women by doing correspondingly heavier work. And then, I think, women, breathing a sigh of relief, will only thank us for relieving them of the role of leader, which was artificially imposed on them by domestic conditions and the moral climate in the family....

'I'm Looking for My Place in the Family' (By Candidate of Economics Igor Olenin) — I think that many husbands would readily hang such a notice in their apartments, as a way of expressing their by no means comic confusion and incomprehension of the role they play in their own homes. Indeed, we seem to be insisting that men drudge away at housework and share all its burdens equally with their wives. At the same time, some specialists — for example, Dr. M. Plzak of Czechoslovakia — caution men against blindly carrying out a program of family behavior drawn up by their wives: They say that this can cause a wife's interest in her partner to wane. So some husbands flail about at random, attempting to find the proper course of conduct by trial and error.

I daresay that only their wives can teach them what it is....

Unfortunately, loud reproaches are the most common teaching method used by many women, who forget the law of

pedagogy: "Try to understand the person you're teaching!"

I'll boldly assert that the main reason for men's insufficient participation in housework is a lack of the skills and habits appropriate to this work.... Although many husbands make a sincere effort, their wives remain unsatisfied. They don't understand that the male's psyche is different from the female's — therefore, it's useless to apply to their husbands the same standard they apply to themselves.

As a rule, any man has to spend a long time "psyching himself up" for an upcoming task, but once he does, he puts everything he's got into it. When he's finished the job and achieved tangible results (incidentally, this is much more important for men than for women), he, with a sense of having done his duty, renews his energy by resting much longer than a woman would. During this time, it's pointless to make even the most trivial request of him — he won't do it, whatever it is. Most men, in general, are unable to quickly switch from one job to another and can't perform several tasks at the same time — something that, thanks to many years of training, presents no difficulty for women. Therefore, one must remember: When a man is working at something, it's best not to distract him.

Try to prevent housework from boring a man — if he gets bored at something or other, it'll be very hard to get him to do that chore again. If he's compelled to perform monotonous operations on the job, or if he's having some problem there, his wife should be especially considerate of him at home. Of course, this doesn't mean that the husband should be totally relieved of all housework — simply find chores that he can prove himself by performing. Perhaps surprisingly, the most beneficial field of such activity is child-rearing. Finding fulfillment in this area is completely possible....

From "A Great Beginning"

Notwithstanding all the liberating laws that have been passed, woman continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labor on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only when a mass struggle (led by the proletariat which is in power) is started against this petty domestic economy, or rather when it is *transformed on a mass scale* into large-scale socialist economy.

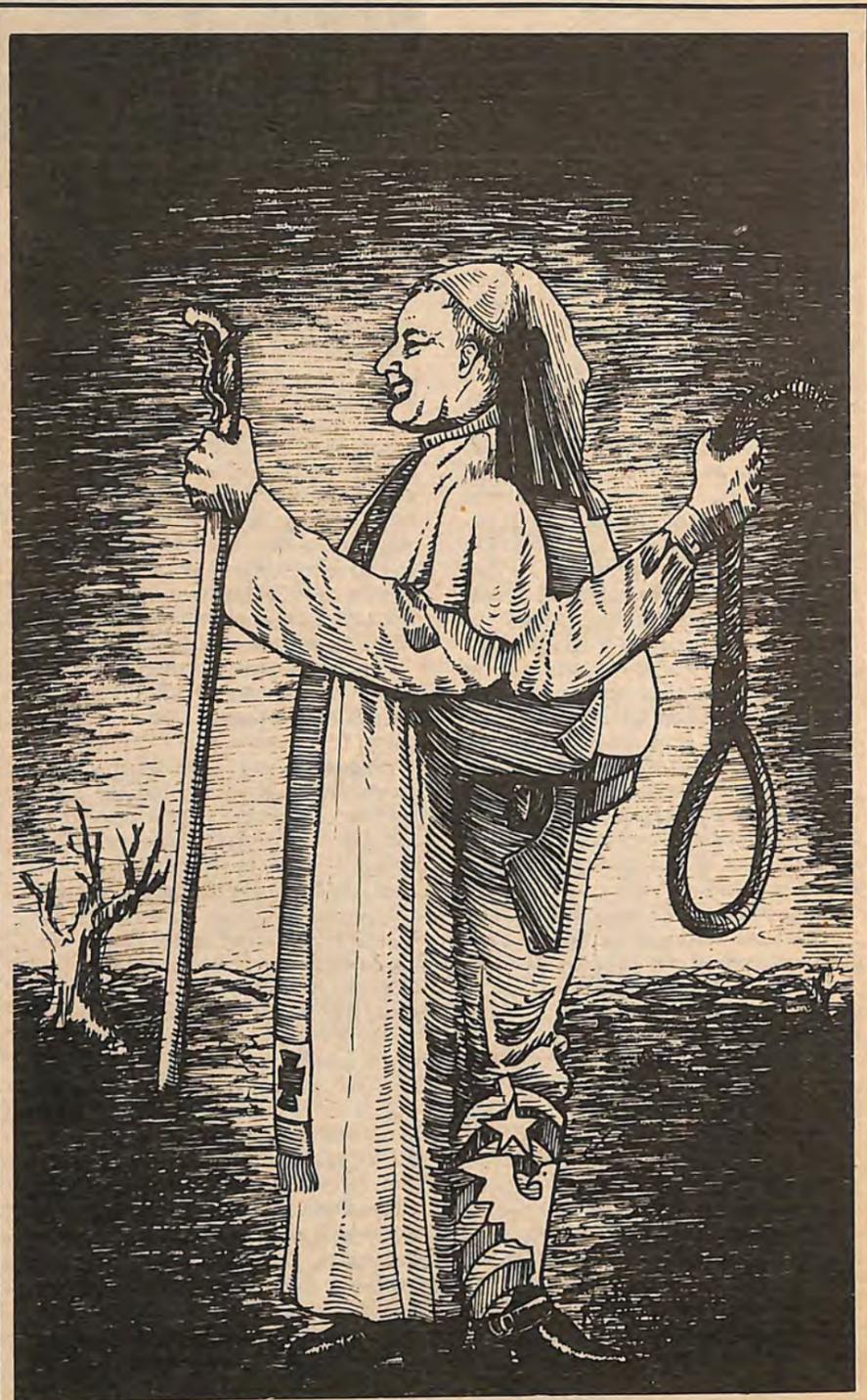
Do we in practice devote sufficient attention to this question, which, theoretically, is indisputable for every Communist? Of course not. Do we devote sufficient care to the *young shoots* of communism which have already sprung up in this sphere? Again we must say emphatically, No! Public dining rooms, *crèches*, kindergartens — these are examples of the shoots, the simple everyday means, which assume nothing pompous, grandiloquent or solemn, but which can in fact *emancipate women*, which can in fact lessen and abolish their inferiority to men in regard to their role in social production and in social life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism; but under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and, second, and what is particularly important, either *profit-making enterprises*, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or the "acrobatics of bourgeois philanthropy," which the best workers quite rightly hated and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has greatly increased and that they are *begin-*

ning to change in character. There is no doubt that there is far more *organizing* talent among the working women and peasant women than we are aware of, people who are able to organize in a practical way and enlist large numbers of workers, and a still larger number of consumers, for this purpose without the abundance of phrases, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., which our swelled-headed "intelligentsia" or half-baked "Communists" always suffer from. But we do not *nurse* these new shoots with sufficient care.

Look at the bourgeoisie! How well it is able to advertise what it requires! See how what the capitalists regard as "model" enterprises are praised in

millions of copies of *their* newspapers; see how "model" bourgeois enterprises are transformed into objects of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly takes the trouble, to describe the best dining rooms or *crèches*, to secure by daily exhortation the transformation of some of them into models. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail what saving in human labor, what conveniences for the consumer, what a saving in products, what emancipation of women from domestic slavery and what an improvement in sanitary conditions can be achieved with *exemplary Communist labor* for the whole of society, for all the toilers. □



News Item: The Reagan administration has announced that \$60 million worth of additional ammunition, rifles and helicopter spare parts (in addition to the \$26 million in military aid already provided) and an unspecified number of additional U.S. "advisors" are needed right away in El Salvador.

Related News Item: Pope John Paul 2 arrived in Central America amid rumors that he will say a good word for negotiations in El Salvador. The Pontiff said he came to "be with those who suffer."

Once again the Pope is playing his role as chief priest and key political representative of the U.S. imperialist bloc to the hilt. He has tailored his visit to several countries in Central

America perfectly to suit the needs of the Western rulers. For the U.S., it is indeed very necessary to have its champions of "peace" and negotiations in El Salvador even as they pour in more weaponry for slaughter. The sweet blessings of His Holiness are quite in tune with the staccato of machinegun fire and more than that provide essential accompaniment to the roar of the battlefield. As Lenin wrote about 68 years ago: "All oppressing classes stand in need of two social functions to safeguard their rule: the function of the hangman and the function of the priest." In Central America, JP2 is demonstrating once again his keen grasp of the role of both these functions. □

"When I got out, I spent most of my time in bed, unable to read because of the headaches, unable to function on a daily basis, like the cookie. In general, doing nothing.

"I couldn't remember my own home. I couldn't remember the day I was married. I couldn't remember my children's hobbies. I couldn't remember faces. I'd be shopping in grocery stores and have people call me by name and ask, 'How are you?' and I'd look at them unable to remember who they were or what they were to my life. I was shopping one day and ran into a woman I had known for years, but to me she was a complete stranger. This was nine months after Electroshock! I was dreadfully ashamed, and I would cry. And then after the frustration of the tears I would get angry.

"The personal and family problems that existed before I went for treatment remained, only now I had the added problem of having my memory erased."

The above quote was used last fall in an article supporting the campaign to ban Electroshock therapy (or Electroconvulsive Treatment, ECT) in the city of Berkeley. A coalition of groups led by NAPA (Network Against Psychiatric Assault) had placed an initiative on the ballot making it a misdemeanor to give shock treatments in Berkeley. Voices of authority in Berkeley and nationally, quickly lined up against the initiative. The daily newspapers in Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco opposed it; the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* advocated keeping medical decisions in the hands of "experts"; several major psychiatric associations began to organize against the initiative, including the American Psychiatric Association, which contributed at least \$10,000 to the campaign to defeat the initiative; Herrick Hospital, the only hospital in Berkeley currently giving ECT, organized its own campaign against the law.

Despite all of this, the initiative passed by a sizeable margin. The reaction from the psychiatric associations and the government was immediate. A psychiatrist from Herrick Hospital crystallized the horrified reaction of his fellow torturers: "Essentially, the Berkeley electorate is practicing medicine without a license... it is a question of principle, of the inmates not being allowed to run the asylum, literally." A lawsuit was filed by four psychiatric societies, arguing that the new law was unconstitutional. While the suit is pending (it could take years to get to court), an Alameda County Superior Court judge has issued an injunction against the new law, allowing ECT to continue. In issuing the injunction, the judge ruled that stopping electroshock violated "patients rights" and the psychiatric societies' suit describes the ECT ban as a violation of "the right of a patient together with his or her physician to make an informed choice of medical treatment."

What these maniacs are really driving at, however, is that the ability of the state and their psychiatric henchmen to employ ECT and other forms of mental torture cannot be infringed upon. The role of much of the psychiatric profession and mental institutions in the U.S. as instruments of social control against women, in particular, has long been hidden. Stories fill the U.S. press about the imprisonment of political opponents in mental institutions in the Soviet Union, but it doesn't take much delving to reveal that this is a subject on which the U.S. imperialists have no right to speak. Since 1930, the enlistment of psychiatrists by the government in putting people away, imprisoning and torturing them in mental institutions has been very common. It has been an established practice — an easy covert way — to deal with those considered too rebellious, "misfits", "social deviants", "behavior problems", ... even radicals. (In the '30s, '40s and '50s, the use of mental institutions to deal with political opponents was openly trumpeted.) In many cases all that is needed for the state to get its hands on its victims is a court order or two and a few signed statements by some quack psychiatrists and a court appointed guardian. Those who are truly mentally sick or insane for whatever reasons (usually by the madness of life in this "sane and normal" society) are driven further by their incarceration and/or "treatment."

The All-American Cure for Women: Electroshock

Women who consciously or unconsciously resist playing their assigned roles or who are driven to the brink by their situation and are unable to escape the clutches of their husbands, families and social agencies, are quite routinely subjected to monstrous abuse.

Consider the following statistics: Since the 1940s over 50,000 lobotomies have been performed in the U.S., mostly on women; estimates are that now at least 1,000 lobotomies are performed a year; in 1975, the last year for which complete national records are available, 100,000 people were given ECT; in California, 70% of those subjected to ECT are women, mostly middle aged or older. Today such things as hydrotherapy (where someone is stripped naked and thrown into a tub of icy water for 6 to 8 hours) and insulin shock have been abandoned in favor of more refined methods such as massive doses of mind bending and immobilizing drugs of all sorts. The reason for this, however, has nothing to do with compassion for the victims of this torture — it's simply cheaper and more effective to use these hideous drugs. And here's one more interesting statistic: William Arnold writes in his book *Shadowland*, which is about the infamous case of Frances Farmer: "The population of the 337 public mental institutions... has

swelled to nearly four times the prison population, and in the past decade more Americans have died in mental hospitals than died in battle in all wars except World War II."

Electroshock is a key weapon in that arsenal. The technique was devised by two Italians who got the idea from watching a pig go into convulsions after being accidentally electrocuted. It consists of giving the "patient" 70 to 130 volts of electricity through the temples for 1/10 to 1/2 a second and long enough to send the victim into convulsions and then coma. Electroshock destroys brain cells and can cause years of agonizing headaches, disorientation, exhaustion and permanent memory loss. In many places the use of ECT is currently on the rise, again mostly for women. One former psychiatric nurse who helped fight for the ban on ECT said, "usually husbands will bring their wives in (for ECT) and say they've stopped having sex, they've stopped wearing lipstick, and they have stopped doing housework."

Another psychiatric nurse at hearings on ECT in Berkeley said: "... Many more women than men are given ECT. Most of these women are over 45 years of age. ECT enforces childlike behavior and enforces traditional female dependence at a time when many women, all women

in this society, are trying to break out of constricting societal roles. Instead of finding their identities, ECT blocked out much of what they already have. ECT is used to keep women in a subservient and inferior position."

As well as a rise in the use of electroshock, recently there have been moves to make lobotomies more widely used and accepted. An article in the December 1982 issue of the prestigious *American Journal of Psychiatry* praised the inventor of the lobotomy and urged more widespread use of modern techniques to slice out sections of the brain (the icepick has been replaced by electric wires and ultra-sound). Women have been the main victims of lobotomies. The first major American champion of lobotomy, Walter Freeman, who performed thousands of operations in the '40s and '50s (including on Frances Farmer), explained why he preferred women "patients":

"The operation is suitable for a woman of whom you expected nothing but that she do a minimal amount of housework... Women make better victims, they tend to submit more easily to victimization and they have less power in general." Expanding and generalizing on his theme, Freeman also said, "Lobotomized patients make rather good citizens."

Mr. Freeman was elected president of the American Board of Psychiatry in 1948. Egar Moniz, the pioneer of the lobotomy, received the Nobel Prize for it in 1949. Freeman bragged of his work and would often do whole strings of lobotomies on one woman after another as he lectured on the benefits of his wondrous operation. The book *Shadowland* quotes one of his lectures: "The patients for whom this operation brings the best results are those who are tortured with self-concern... whether it expresses itself in pains in the body organs or terrible distress from feelings of persecution... In ordinary language, the technique severs the nerves that deliver emotional power to ideas. Along with the cure comes some loss in the patient's imaginative power. But that's what we want to do. They are sick in their imaginations..."

This chilling quote expresses quite succinctly the very conscious use of lobotomies, electroshock, and the rest of the hideous methods employed by Freeman and those like him today, at the behest of the ruling class, as a means to enforce and defend the insane status quo of this society including its twisted social relations. A major part of their job is to ensure that people, especially women, fit into their assigned role and punish those who can't or refuse to. They attempt to make sure that women, who fall into their grip, stay in their place and if necessary make them literally unable to imagine and dream of anything different. The rulers of this country may look with horror at the witch burnings of centuries past, yet they themselves are carrying on the tradition — of course, with refined and modern techniques. And their fight to preserve ECT shows that they have every intention of marching more women to the stake. □

Break The Chains — Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Revolution

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Available from:

• Revolution Books
90 River St., Cambridge, MA 02139

*This is the correct address, the one in last weeks RW was wrong.



Graphic on front of T-shirt



back of shirt

ORDER IN TIME TO WEAR ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!

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Please specify small, medium, large, or extra large.

March 8 is International Women's Day. Thus, in keeping with President Reagan's declaration of 1983 as "The Year of the Bible," we thought it would be fitting to provide an opportunity for readers of the RW to contemplate its teaching on women. Though many propertyless sinners think the myth of Yahweh was debunked some two hundred years ago, it lingers on. And since today's bible thumpers, holy priests and politicians cry out for a return to the Christian way of life according to "God's inspired word," one ought to take heed of what Yahweh had in mind.

Now some misguided souls may just reject the bible out of hand as an obscurantist relic of slave society. Oh, Wicked and Foolish ones! Would they deny this treasure of the judeo-christian heritage — nay of Western civilization itself? For, in truth, the scriptures of the christian New Testament not only build on and perfect the scriptures of judaism, the Old Testament, they also draw on the insights of the pillars of Western thought and culture, the Greek philosophers of antiquity. This enduring tradition has been further forged, link by link, down to our very own day. It has been embellished by the great theologians and fathers of the church from Jerome, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas to the current occupant of Peter's throne. Passed down by faith (often aided by an inquisition, a witch hunt or a moral majority) the bible's teachings on the nature and role of women are still alive in the modern imperialist world.

Small wonder the evangelical preachers cry with such vehemence today for a return to strict obedience to these biblical injunctions in order to preserve and expand God's blessings on this the most favored of his nations and reverse its decline and disintegration. So, we are hereby presenting the following quotations, * which put the "christian" tradition on women in a proper light, with confidence that our readers will mark them well.

*Most of the quotations from the bible were taken from *The Jerusalem Bible* (Jones; Doubleday & Company, Inc.)

In the "Year of the Bible"

The Christian Against W

Ancient Greece: The Enlightened Tradition of Democracy

He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence. But if he failed in attaining this, at the second birth he would pass into a woman, and if, when in that state of being, he did not desist from evil, he would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature he had acquired...

Plato, *Timeaus*

... Woman — left without chastening restraint — is not, as you might fancy, merely half the problem; nay, she is a twofold and more than a twofold problem, in proportion as her native disposition is inferior to man's.

Plato, *Laws*

We should look upon the female state as being as it were a deformity, though one which occurs in the ordinary course of nature.

Aristotle, *The Generation of Animals*

The courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying.

Aristotle, *Politics*

The first and least parts of a family are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children... For that some should rule, and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.

Aristotle, *Politics*

Dangerous Daughters

Yahweh God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. Yahweh God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!
This is to be called woman,
for this was taken from man.'

Genesis 2:18-23

The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?'... The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loin cloths... Then Yahweh God said...

'To the woman...
I will multiply your pains in childbearing,
you shall give birth to your children in pain.
Your yearning shall be for your husband
Yet he will lord it over you.'

Genesis 3:1-17

When a woman has a discharge of blood, and blood flows from her body, this uncleanness of her monthly periods shall last for seven days.

Anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening.
Any bed she lies on in this state will be unclean; any seat she sits on will be unclean.

Anyone who touches her bed must wash his clothing and wash himself and will be unclean until evening... When she is cured of her flow, she will let seven days pass; then she will be clean. On the eighth day she is to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. With one of them the priest is to offer a sacrifice for sin and with the other a holocaust. This is the way in which the priest will per-

form the rite of atonement over her before Yahweh for the flow that caused her uncleanness.

Leviticus 15: 19-55

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say: "If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy, she is to be unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly periods. . . . and she must wait another thirty three days for her blood to be purified. . . . If she gives birth to a girl, she is to be unclean for two weeks, as during her monthly periods; and she must wait another sixty-six days for her blood to be purified."'

Leviticus 12: 1-5

Any wound rather than a wound of the heart!
Any spite rather than the spite of woman!
Any evil rather than an evil caused by an enemy!
Any vengeance rather than the vengeance of a foe!
There is no poison worse than the poison of a snake,
there is no fury worse than the fury of an enemy.

I would sooner keep house with a lion or a dragon
than keep house with a spiteful wife.
A woman's spite changes her appearance
and makes her face as grim as any bear's!
When her husband goes out to dinner with his neighbors,
he cannot help heaving bitter sighs.

No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman,
may a sinner's lot be hers!

As climbing up a sandhill is for elderly feet
such is a garrulous wife for a quiet husband.
Do not be taken in by a woman's beauty,
never lose your head over a woman.

Bad temper, insolence and shame hold sway
where the wife supports the husband.
Low spirits, gloomy face, stricken heart:
such the achievements of a spiteful wife.
Slack hands and sagging knees
indicate a wife who makes her husband wretched.

Sin began with a woman
and thanks to her we all must die.

Do not let water find a leak,
do not allow a spiteful woman free rein for her tongue.
If she will not do as you tell her,
get rid of her.

Keep a headstrong daughter under firm control,
or she will abuse any indulgence she receives.
Keep a strict watch on her shameless eye,
do not be surprised if she disgraces you.
Like a thirsty traveller she will open her mouth
and drink any water she comes across;
she will sit in front of every peg,
and open her quiver to any arrow.

A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,
no price can be put on a well-trained character.

Ecclesiasticus 25 and 26 (JB)

A woman will accept any husband
but some daughters are better than others...

Ecclesiasticus 36: 21 (JB)

Unknown to her, a daughter keeps her father awake,
the worry she gives him drives away his sleep:
in her youth, in case she never marries,
married, in case she should be disliked,
as a virgin, in case she should be defiled
and found with child in her father's house,
having a husband, in case she goes astray,
married, in case she should be barren.
Your daughter is headstrong? Keep a sharp look-out
that she does not make you the laughing-stock of your enemies,
the talk of the town, the object of common gossip,
and put you to public shame.

Ecclesiasticus 42: 9-11

Women

Do not stare at any man for his good looks,
do not sit down with the women,

for moth comes out of clothes
and woman's spite out of woman.
A man's spite is preferable to a woman's kindness;
women give rise to shame and reproach.

Ecclesiasticus 42: 12-14

The affair of Vashti

Queen Vashti, too, had given a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus. . . . But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. The king was very angry at this and his rage grew hot. He then consulted the wise men who were versed in the law. . . . In the presence of the king and of the administrators Memucan answered, 'Vashti has wronged not only the king, but also all the administrators and nations inhabiting the provinces of King Ahasuerus. The queen's conduct will soon become known to all the women and encourage them in a contemptuous attitude toward their husbands. . . .'

Esther 1: 9-17

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

Exodus 22: 17

Masters, Marauders and Condescending Saviours

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.

Exodus 20: 17 (10th Commandment)

When Yahweh brings you to the land of the Cananites — as he swore to you and your fathers he would do — and gives it to you, you are to make over to Yahweh all that first issues from the womb, and every first-born cast by your animals: these males belong to Yahweh.

Exodus 13: 11

Have you cattle? Look after them;
if they are making you a profit, keep them.
Have you children? Educate them,
make them bow the neck from childhood.
Have you daughters? Take care of their bodies,
but do not be over-indulgent.
Marry a daughter off, and you have finished a great work,
but give her to a man of sense.
Have you a wife to your liking? Do not turn her out;
but if you dislike her, never trust her.

Ecclesiasticus 7: 22-28

They waged a campaign against Midian, as Yahweh has ordered Moses, and they had put every male to death. . . . Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went out of the camp to meet them. Moses was enraged with the commanders of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come back from this military expedition. He said, 'Why have you spared the life of all the women? These were the very ones who, on Balaam's advice, perverted the sons of Israel and made them renounce Yahweh in the affair at Peor; hence the plague which struck the community of Israel. So kill all the male children. Kill also all the women who have slept with a man. Spare the lives only of the young girls who have not slept with a man, and take them for yourselves.'

Numbers 31: 7-19

The spoils, the remainder of the booty captured by the soldiers, came to six hundred and seventy five thousand head of small stock, seventy two thousand head of cattle, sixty one thousand donkeys, and in persons, women who had never slept with a man, thirty two thousand in all. . . .

Numbers 31: 33-36

When the two angels reached Sodom in the evening, Lot was sitting at the gate. As soon as Lot saw them he rose to meet them and bowed to the ground. I beg you, my lords, he said, please come down to your servant's house to stay the night and wash your feet. . . . They had not gone to bed when the house was surrounded by the men of the town, the men of Sodom both young and old. . . . Calling to Lot they said, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us that we may abuse them.'

Lot came out to them at the door, and having closed the door behind him said, 'I beg you my brothers, do no such wicked thing.

an Case Women

bearing it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty....

1 Peter 2: 18-20

In marriage

In the same way, wives should be obedient to their husbands. Then, if there are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word, they may find themselves won over, without a word spoken, by the way their wives behave when they see how faithful and conscientious they are.

1 Peter 3: 1-3

The morals of the home

Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything.

Paul, Ephesians 5: 21-25

Cure of Peter's Mother-in-law

And going into Peter's house Jesus found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

Matthew 8: 14-15

The woman was a sinner

... When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table, a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is that is touching him and what a bad name she has.' Then Jesus took him up and said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Speak, Master' was the reply. 'There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he pardoned them both. Which of them will love him more?'

Luke 7: 36-43

The daughter of the Syrophenician woman healed

... A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard

about him straight away and came and fell at his feet. Now the woman was a pagan, by birth a Syrophenician, and she begged him to cast the devil out of her daughter. And he said to her, 'The children should be fed first, because it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' But she spoke up: 'Ah yes, sir,' she replied 'but the house-dogs under the table can eat the children's scraps.' And he said to her, 'For saying this, you may go home happy: the devil has gone out of your daughter.'...

Mark 7: 24-30

A Woman's Place

A woman in childbirth suffers, because her time has come; but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering in her joy that a man has been born into the world.

John 16: 21

If a man marries a wife, and sleeps with her and then turns against her, and taxes her with misconduct and publicly defames her by saying, "I married this woman and when I slept with her I did not find the evidence of her virginity" the girl's father and mother must take her and produce the evidence of her virginity before the elders of the town at the gate. The girl's father shall then declare to the elders, "I gave this man my daughter for a wife and he has turned against her and now he taxes her for misconduct. I found no evidence of virginity in your daughter, he says. But the evidence of my daughter's virginity is here." And they shall spread the cloth out before the elders of the town. Then the elders of the town shall take the man and flog him and fine him one hundred silver shekels for publicly defaming a virgin of Israel, and give this money to the girl's father. She shall remain his wife and as long as he lives he may not repudiate her.

But if the accusation that the girl cannot show the evidence of virginity is substantiated they shall take her to the door of her father's house and her fellow citizens shall stone her to death...

Deuteronomy 22: 13-21

If a virgin is betrothed and a man meets her in the city and sleeps with her, you shall take them both out to the gate of the town and stone them to death, the girl, because she did not cry for help in the town; the man, because he has violated the wife of his fellow. You must banish this evil from your midst. But if the man has met the betrothed girl in the open country and has taken her by force and lain with her, only the man who lay with her shall die; you must do nothing to the girl, for hers is not capital offense. The case is like that of a man who attacks and kills his fellow; for he came across her in the open country and the betrothed girl could

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Listen, I have two daughters who are virgins. I am ready to send them out to you, to treat as it pleases you. But as for the men, do nothing to them, for they have come under the shadow of my roof.'

Genesis 19: 1-9

Towards masters

Slaves must be respectful and obedient to their masters, not only when they are kind and gentle but also when they are unfair. You see, there is some merit in putting up with the pains of unearned punishment if it is done for the sake of God but there is nothing meritorious in taking a beating patiently if you have done something wrong to deserve it. The merit, in the sight of God, is in



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Sharon's New Post

Remember, just a month ago, when Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon resigned his post after the Israeli commission on the Beirut massacre recommended his dismissal? "Sharon isn't going far," we said at the time. And he didn't. The "minister without portfolio" was named to two committees of the Israeli cabinet: The Committee on Defense, and the committee overseeing negotiations for a peace treaty with Lebanon.

Sharon, in "disgrace" a few weeks ago (along with the "soul of Israel"), has already received an invitation from the Young Israel Organization to be the key-

note speaker at the orthodox group's convention later this month. The president of Young Israel, Harold Jacobs, beamed, "We will give Sharon a royal welcome, as befits one of the greatest Israeli heroes and the architect of the brilliant victory in Lebanon."

Sharon's successor in the defense post, Moshe Arens, former Israeli ambassador to the U.S., told the *Jerusalem Post* that "Sharon possessed vast experience and his advice would be valued." Every democracy values the advice of experienced people like Ariel Sharon! □

Christian

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have cried out without anyone coming to her rescue.

Deuteronomy 22: 22-29

If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and sleeps with her, he must pay her price and make her his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to let him have her, the seducer must pay a sum of money equal to the price fixed for a virgin.

Exodus 22: 15-17

... Every vow or oath that is binding on the wife may be endorsed or annulled by the husband...

These are the laws ordained by Yahweh to Moses, concerning the relationship between man and wife, and between a father and his daughter while still young and living in her father's home.

Numbers 30: 14, 17

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said "Say this to the sons of Israel: "If anyone has a wife who goes astray and is unfaithful to him, if some other man sleeps with the woman without the husband's knowledge, if she disgraces herself in secret in this way, without any witness against her, and without anyone catching her in the act; then, if a spirit of jealousy comes over the husband and makes him jealous for the wife who has disgraced herself, or again if this spirit of jealousy comes upon him and makes him jealous for his wife even when she is innocent; the man must bring his wife before the priest, and on her behalf make an offering of one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal. . . .

"The priest is then to bring the woman forward and stand her before Yahweh. Then he shall take living water in an earthen jar, and on the water throw dust that he has taken from the floor of the tabernacle. . . .

"He is then to put the woman on oath. He shall say to her: If it is not true that a man has slept with you, that you have gone astray and disgraced yourself while under your husband's authority, then may this water of bitterness and cursing do you no harm. But if it is true that you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, that you have disgraced yourself by sharing your bed with a man other than your husband. . . . Here the priest shall impose an imprecatory oath on the woman. He shall say to her: '... May Yahweh make of you an execration and a curse among your people, making your thigh shrivel and your belly swell! May this water of cursing enter your bowels to swell your belly and shrivel your organs!' The woman must answer: Amen, Amen!

"Then the priest shall commit these curses to writing and wash them off in the water of bitterness. He must make the woman drink this water of bitterness and of cursing, and this water of cursing shall go into her and be bitter inside her.

"... After he has made her drink it, if it is true that she has disgraced herself, deceiving her husband, then the water of cursing that goes into her shall indeed be bitter: her belly will swell and her thigh shrivel, and she will be an execration among her people. But if she has not disgraced herself and is clean, then she will go unscathed and will bear children.

"This is the ritual in cases of jealousy, when a woman has gone astray and disgraced herself while under her husband's authority, or when a spirit of jealousy has come over a man and made him jealous for his wife. When a husband brings such a woman before Yahweh, the priest must apply this ritual to her in full. The husband shall be guiltless, but the woman must bear the punishment for her sin."

Numbers 5: 11-13

If brothers live together and one of them dies childless, the dead man's wife must not marry a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother must come to her and, exercising his levirate, make her his wife, and the first son she bears shall assume the dead brother's name; and so his name will not be blotted out. . . .

Deuteronomy 25: 5-7 (JB)

They spoke before Moses and the leaders. . . and said: "Yahweh has ordered my lord to give the land to the sons of Israel, sharing it out by lot; and my lord has been ordered by Yahweh to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. Now if they marry someone from another tribe in the sons of Israel, their property will be taken away from the inheritance of our fathers. The property of the tribe to which they will belong will be increased, and the property allotted to us diminished. And when the jubilee comes round for the sons of Israel, the property of these women will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they then belong, and lost to the inheritance of our own patriarchal tribe."

Moses, at Yahweh's bidding, gave the following ruling to the sons of Israel. He said:

"The tribe of the sons of Joseph is in the right. This is Yahweh's ruling for the daughters of Zelophehad: "They may marry whom they please, providing they marry into a clan of their father's tribe. The heritage of the sons of Israel is not to be transferred from tribe to tribe; every man of the sons of Israel is to remain bound to the heritage of his particular tribe. Every daughter who has a heritage in one of the tribes of the sons of Israel must marry into a clan of her own paternal tribe, so that the sons of Israel may

each preserve the heritage of his father. No heritage may be transferred from one tribe to another; every tribe of the sons of Israel will stay bound to its own heritage."

Numbers 36: 2-9 (JB)

The question about divorce

Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and he left Galilee and came into the part of Judea which is on the far side of the Jordan. . . .

Some Pharisees approached him, and to test him they said, "Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?" He answered, "Have you not read that the creator from the beginning *made them male and female* and that he said: *This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body?* They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide."

They said to him, "Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?" "It was because you were so unteachable" he said "that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. Now I say this to you: the man who divorces his wife — I am not speaking of fornication — and marries another, is guilty of adultery."

The disciples said to him, "If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is not advisable to marry." . . .

Matthew 19: 1-11 (JB)

Yahweh said: Because of the haughtiness of the daughters of Zion, the way they walk with their heads held high and enticing eyes, the way they mince along, tinkling the bangles on their feet, the Lord will give the daughters of Zion itching heads and uncover their nakedness.

Isaiah 3: 16-18

Modesty in Brawls

When two men are fighting together, if the wife of one intervenes to protect her husband from the other's blows by putting out her hand and seizing the other by the private parts, you shall cut her hand off and show no pity.

Deuteronomy 25: 11-12 (JB)

... Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ. For a man to pray or prophesy with his head covered is a sign of disrespect to his head. For a woman, however, it is a sign of disrespect to her head if she prays or prophesies unveiled; she might as well have her hair shaved off. In fact, a woman who will not wear a veil ought to have her hair cut off. If a woman is ashamed to have her hair cut off or shaved, she ought to wear a veil.

A man should certainly not cover his head, since he is the image of God and reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory. For man did not come from woman; no woman came from man; and man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman was created for the sake of man. That is the argument for women's covering their heads with a symbol of the authority over them, out of respect for the angels.

1 Corinthians 11: 3-11 (JB)

Paul

As in all the churches of the saints, women are to remain quiet at meetings since they have no permission to speak; they must keep in the background as the Law itself lays it down. If they have any questions to ask, they should ask their husbands: it does not seem right for a woman to raise her voice at meetings.

1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 (JB)

Paul

Similarly, I direct that women are to wear suitable clothes and to be dressed quietly and modestly, without braided hair or gold and jewelry. . . . During instruction, a woman should be quiet and respectful. I am not giving permission for a woman to teach or to tell a man what to do. A woman ought not to speak, because Adam was formed first and Eve afterwards, and it was not Adam who was led astray but the woman who was led astray and fell into sin. Nevertheless, she will be saved by childbearing, provided she lives a modest life and is constant in faith and love and holiness.

Paul, 1 Timothy : 9-15 (JB)

It is for you then, to preach the behavior which goes with healthy doctrine. The older men should be reserved, dignified, moderate, sound in faith and love and constancy. Similarly, the older women should behave as though they were religious, with no scandal mongering and no habitual wine-drinking — they are to be the teachers of the right behavior and show the younger women how they should love their husbands and love their children, how they are to be sensible and chaste, and how to work in their homes, and be gentle, and do as their husbands tell them, so the message of God is never disgraced.

Paul, Titus: 2: 1-5 (JB)

Widows

Be considerate to widows; I mean those who are truly widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, they are to learn first of all to do their duty to their own families and repay their debt to

their parents, because this is what pleases God. But a woman who is really widowed and left without anybody can give herself up to God and consecrate all her days and nights to petitions and prayer. The one who thinks only of pleasure is already dead while she is still alive; remind them of all this, too, so that their lives may be blameless. . . .

Enrollment as a widow is permissible only for a woman at least sixty years old who has had only one husband. . . . Do not accept young widows because if their natural desires get stronger than their dedication to Christ, they want to marry again, and then people condemn them for being unfaithful to their original promise. Besides they learn how to be idle and go round from house to house; and then, not merely idle, they learn to be gossips, and meddlers in other people's affairs, and to chatter when they would be better keeping quiet. I think it is best for young widows to marry again and have children and a home to look after, and not give the enemy any chance to raise a scandal about them; there are already some who have left us to follow Satan. . . .

Paul, 1 Timothy 5: 3-18

Blessed be God that he did not make me a slave, a gentile or a woman. (man's prayer — *RW*) Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will. (woman's prayer — *RW*)

Hebrew Book of Morning Prayer.

The Christian Fathers

For love befits the man; fear befits the woman. As for the slave, not only fear is befitting him, but also trembling.

St. Jerome

Do you not know that you are Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway. . . . How easily you destroyed man, the image of God. Because of the death which you brought upon us, even the Son of God had to die.

Tertullian

In her the good Christian. . . likes what is human, loathes what is feminine.

St. Augustine

It was necessary for woman to be made, as the Scripture says, as a helper to man not, indeed, as a helpmate in other works, as some say, since man can be more efficiently helped by another man in other works; but as a helper in the work of generation. . . .

As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence; such as that of a south wind, which is moist, as the Philosopher (Aristotle — *RW*) observes.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I Question 92

When all things were first formed, it was more suitable for the woman to be made from the man than. . . in other animals. First, in order thus to give the first man a certain dignity consisting in this, that as God as the principle of the whole universe, so the first man, in the likeness to God, was the principle of the whole human race. . . . Wherefore it was suitable for the woman to be made out of man, as out of her principle.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Ibid.*

Equality is twofold, of quantity and of proportion. . . . Accordingly, speaking of the first equality, husband and wife are not equal in marriage; neither as regards the marriage act, wherein the more noble part is due to the husband, nor as regards the household management, wherein the wife is ruled and the husband rules.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Ibid.*

Experience confirms that there must be a social re-evaluation of the mother's role, of the toil connected with it and of the need that children have for care, love and affection in order that they may develop into responsible, morally and religiously stable persons. . . . Having to abandon these tasks in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of society and of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother.

Pope John Paul II, "Laborem Exercens"

If we expect God to honor and bless our nation, we must take a stand against abortion.

Jerry Falwell, *Listen America*

I believe at the foundation of the women's movement there is a minority core of women. . . who have not accepted their God given role.

Jerry Falwell, *Listen America*

etc., etc., etc. □

Accumulating Revolutionary Forces for the Coming Showdown

The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA held an important meeting in the latter part of 1982. In RW No. 194 we reprinted as a special supplement all of the documents of the meeting. They consisted of background material which was circulated before the meeting and the Report from the CC, all of which was written by a leading member of the Central Committee on the basis of points raised by its Chairman, Bob Avakian. Because of the importance of the questions dealt with in these documents, and also because some of our readers might not have seen RW No. 194, we are reprinting these documents in sections. This week we are reprinting the background material. Next week we will reprint Part I and Part II of the Report from the Central Committee.

The supplement from RW No. 194 containing all the documents from the meeting may be obtained from the RCP in your area, or may be ordered by sending 75¢ to: RCP Publications, PO Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654. The price includes postage.

Background Material for RCP, USA Central Committee Meeting

I. Advance and Consolidation (Spiral-Like Development), Including a Philosophical Point on Relative Identity

Advance and consolidation are a unity of opposites. Both are necessary. While advance is overall principal, without consolidation there will be no real advance. We will not be able to "come from behind..." unless we grasp this firmly. Coming from behind is not, and will not be, a straight line process either.

It has been pointed out by good basketball commentators that when a team is twenty points behind, say in the third quarter, it is generally a mistake to try to catch it all up at once; you'll exhaust yourself and fall short. Better to make a run that cuts the lead to ten by the end of the quarter, and then catch up the rest in the final period. (Of course, twenty points down in the third quarter is not time to "take it easy" either.) What is true in basketball (in this case at least) is also true in revolutionary preparation.

While this may seem like a polemical point against "leftism" (and it does have that element), overall this is a point against economism ("left" and right), which as we have pointed out, is characterized by this straight line thinking on the process of revolution.

All this relates to our important analysis of the 1980s, which has been deepened especially at the time of the 1979 Central Committee and since. While the basic analysis in the '79 CC report of the coming period is quite sharp and correct, perhaps there could have been more taking into account there of spiral-like development within the overall trend of the heightening of contradictions and the increase in the level of our work. The 1980s themselves, as we have seen, will be marked by ebb and flow, and (more directly to the point) our efforts cannot be a constant high-pitch either. War communism is necessary at times, but cannot and should not be generally maintained. The point here is not that things have been going slower than we thought so far this decade. Far from it.

World contradictions are sharpening at a rapid rate (... how many wars have been fought in the last 6 months alone?...). There has been some active preparation, to say the least, on the part of the enemy. And on a world scale, too, the people's struggles so far this decade have clearly already exceeded the mid-'70s. The U.S., too, has seen the emergence of social movements of real significance. So our analysis has been proven correct; even the full-ahead "tilt" that it had in 1979 was correct, given the notably accelerating pace of events confronting us at that time in particular. But still the point remains that there can be no straight ahead path; that consolidation is both objective for the party and requires conscious efforts to handle it correctly in order to maximize the overall advance.

Mao pointed out, in the context of the military struggle against Japan, that while extending the ground they'd already won was the main thing overall, "Holding our ground and extending it are inseparably connected." ("After the Fall of Shanghai and Taiyuan", *SW*, V. 2, p. 68) (Of course, for Mao, "holding ground" was not an absolute either; sometimes it was necessary to give some ground in order to gain time and prepare a counter-offensive.) Mao also points out that "It is essential to rest and train our troops, and the best time for doing so is when the enemy is on the defensive. [Mao also siezed on other times when for various reasons the enemy was not engaging in full scale attack — for example during part of the Yen-an period — ed.] It is not a question of shutting ourselves off from everything else for rest and training, but of finding time for rest and training while expanding our areas, mopping

up small enemy units and arousing the people..." ("Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War," V. 2, p. 106) For Mao the point of all this, clearly, was not turning inward, nor failure to carry out the central task at hand — in that case, destroying Japan's army by war. Rather it was grasping that if the revolutionary forces do not train, rest, consolidate, then no expansion takes place. As Mao put it, "The correct principle is expansion with consolidation..." ("Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War," V. 2, p. 101)

The point of raising all this, however, is *not* that this should be mainly a period of consolidation for us. On the contrary, overall it should be one of advance and expansion, preparing for still more in the future. But, in opposition to straight line thinking, it is important to grasp the general principles here, particularly the point about "expansion with consolidation." And beyond that this should be a period of consolidation on the philosophical and ideological fronts.

For some time now, we've been overthrowing quite a few basic conventions from the history of the international communist movement. And in a sense, this is a fundamental and ongoing process; but, this too must proceed through spirals, related in part to the spiral of theory and practice. We've thrown a lot of shit up in the air, challenged and made critical evaluation of some rather major things. Now it is time to bring the threads of that together; it is not now the time to be doing more questioning of basic things as much as it is to be taking out broadly the synthesis of what we have done. In other words, it is time to emphasize the consolidation of the critical evaluation we've made, pulling together the synthesis (the basis of which exists, especially in "Conquer the World?..." as well as the *New Programme* and other basic party documents) and taking it out, rather than raising a whole lot of new and basic things up. That's the main aspect now. This does not mean we should not continue to be critical or excavate some more things, to make further advances in building off of and deepening our basic line in an all-around way, in many spheres and in the course of applying it. But the main emphasis is on consolidating that basic line and taking it out, while secondarily we should do some more critical excavating.

It is also true that we have to do some consolidating on the organizational front as well (centering on, but not limited to, party building). But here, it is important to see the main thing in this regard as growth, advance. As stressed in a number of things lately, including the Chairman's pamphlet on the party², and the editorial after May First 1982, the party should be growing quantitatively, particularly in its basic membership. Even the qualitative aspect of party-building, besides the line, includes (as "Conquer the World?..." put it) "the training of party members *and* those drawn towards the party in theory and in practice..." (p. 48, emphasis added). So organizationally, we should be stressing growth and advance, and (as the Chairman emphasized particularly in his piece on "A Social Base for Proletarian Internationalism")³ an ongoing process that includes consolidation as an integral part of it.

Both of the above points relate to the need, and should strengthen our ability, to make the party and its line more accessible more broadly among the masses. We should go full speed ahead carrying out our all-around work, popularizing the party and its basic line among the masses awakening to political life and bringing forward the advanced around and into the party.

There is a philosophical point that relates to all the above, and it is one that deserves some emphasis right now if we are to correctly grasp the role of consolidation on the ideological and philosophical fronts. Marxism cannot and does not reject the notion of relative identity. To say that change is absolute means there is also relative rest. And, together with this, to say change is ab-

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Accumulating Revolutionary Forces for the Coming Showdown

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solute does not mean that any given thing is less itself than it is itself at any given time. This deserves some stress now; "Communists Are Rebels" emphasizes the opposite (and overall fundamental) aspect of change — although that pamphlet is quite correct and even relevant with its (oft' forgotten!) basic theme of materialism.

In "On the Question of Dialectics" in his *Philosophical Notebooks* (V. 38) Lenin wrote: "The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute." Immediately after this important passage, however, just to make the other aspect clear, Lenin made the following succinct and relevant observation: "NB: The distinction between subjectivism (skepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute." (p. 358)

Some might argue, well, there is the absolute, but it resides only in the universal, the infinite "sum total" of things. But if that were so, there would in fact be no absolute, or objective truth, since, as Mao pointed out in "On Contradiction," the universal does not exist apart from the particular and "without individual character there can be no general character." (SW, V. 1, p. 330) If there were no absolute within the relative, then our knowledge at any time would not be *relative* and a (partial) reflection of objective truth, but would be invalid and agnosticism and idealism would reign supreme. Lenin pointed out in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* that "Dialectics... contains an element of relativism, of negation, of scepticism, but is not reducible to relativism." (V. 14, p. 137)

Lenin wrote, in a passage that should disturb both dogmatists and agnostics and should delight real scientists, "You will say that this distinction between relative and absolute truth is indefinite. And I shall reply: it is sufficiently 'indefinite' to prevent science from becoming a dogma in the bad sense of the term, from becoming something dead, frozen, ossified; but at the same time it is sufficiently 'definite' to enable us to dissociate ourselves in the most emphatic and irrevocable manner from fideism and agnosticism, from philosophical idealism and the sophistry of the followers of Hume and Kant." (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 136)

The thing about dialectics, you see, is that it rescued *materialism* (in Lenin's time anyway) from agnosticism and idealism (which, at first at least, presented itself in the form of mechanical materialism and then flipped into more open idealist forms when that broke down in the face of new advances).

There are, it is true, no absolute boundaries. But there are particular states of matter, that is particular forms of motion (including in the stage of relative rest as well as conspicuous change) whose essence (while relative) is also definable and distinguishable from other forms of motion.

One example of the political consequences of not grasping this can be seen in Hoxha's mashing together of the character of revolution in the two (basic) types of countries in the world — oppressed nations and imperialist countries. In typical Trotskyite (and Menshevik) style the result is sometimes a "leftist" skipping of stages in the oppressed nations, but just as often, and more fundamentally, it is overt rightism — for example, ascribing a national character to the "revolution" in imperialist countries. Ultimately, the agnosticism associated with the kind of philosophical error gone into above will produce the kinds of despair and political capitulationism described, for example, in "Coming From Behind..."

An example from chemistry (cited by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*) might shed still more light on the philosophical point here and its ideological and political implications for us: Boyle's law is a law which states that if the temperature remains constant the volume of a gas varies inversely with the pressure to which it is subjected. Engels tells of a scientist, Regnault, who found that this law does not hold good in certain cases. Engels then says that if Regnault had been a philosopher like Dühring he would have had to say: Boyle's law is mutable, and hence not a genuine truth, hence it is not a truth at all, hence it is an error.

"But," as Engels points out, "had he done this he would have committed an error far greater than the one that was contained in Boyle's law; his grain of truth would have been lost sight of in a sand-hill of error; he would have distorted his originally correct conclusion into an error compared with which Boyle's law, along with the little particle of error that clings to it, would have seemed like truth." ("IX. Morality and Law. Eternal Truths," Progress Pub., 1969, p. 111)

Fortunately, Engels reports, "Regnault, being a man of science, did not indulge in such childishness but continued his investigations..." He discovered that Boyle's law loses its validity at temperatures approaching the temperature at which the particular gas liquifies — and even within its temperature limits Boyle's law is, of course, not absolutely and finally true. But that does not mean it is not a part of science, not a reflection of reality and therefore need not be studied or applied. Would such a viewpoint on Boyle's law aid or retard science at its present level?

It is true that the proletariat, as the revolutionary class, has nothing ideologically or materially to fortify against progress and, as a vanguard party, we are not interested in such fortification. But, we *are* interested in science, in the actual process by which it advances and in making revolution. Therefore, it is well worthwhile to note what Bob Avakian wrote in *Mao Tseung's Immortal Contributions* (interestingly enough against Deng and his pragmatism): "To say at any point, 'Well, tomorrow we will know more than today so let's not (dogmatically) apply what is known as truth today,' is to deny and disrupt the process by which more knowledge is actually acquired. This is metaphysical because it goes against the actual dialectical relationship between theory and practice; it is idealist because it actually denies objective truth." (p. 156)

A final thought on this point. Mao did not say, "Unity is transformed into struggle, and then there is *struggle* again." Nor did he say, "Great disorder across the land leads to great *disorder*." In the first case the word was actually "unity" and in the second, "order." True, in both phrases (and in context it is still clearer) Mao was emphasizing the fundamental aspect ("Struggle," "Disorder"). But Mao was precisely a dialectician, so he did not neglect the aspect of relative identity either. (Of course, as we know — and Mao himself knew — "flowers fall off do what one may" and, particularly where the class struggle is concerned, things often do not go as planned and the enemy, or other

developments, may not allow such relative order at any particular time. But is it wrong, irrelevant, and never timely to point out this aspect? Real Marxists, apparently, think not.)

II. More on Central Task, Accumulating Revolutionary Forces

For some time now, in the course of deepening our understanding of central task, we have come to understand more deeply that the basic character of our work in this whole period is preparation, preparation for the seizure of power. This in itself (linked of course with increased political clarity on the *content* of that preparation) represents progress against various reformist views. In particular, it represents a break with gradualist views and strategies aimed at getting the so-called "vanguard" firmly rooted (or swamped) in the mainstream. As the Chairman has recently pointed out, even among the Maoist forces there has been the tendency to think that the masses will at all times be with you if you are correct — and this has indeed been a frustrating (and ultimately deadly) notion.

Preparation, to be sure, is no passive pastime. Mao put an exclamation point on that when he said, "... the whole of the Anti-Japanese War constituted a preparation." ("Talk on Questions of Philosophy," *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, Schram, ed., 1974, p. 217)

As we have emphasized preparation so, too, we have emphasized the international dimension, and specifically how in the imperialist era developments in any one country are more determined by contradictions in the international arena than by contradictions internal to that country. And we have pointed to the links between these two questions, preparation and the international dimension, particularly with our analysis of historic conjuncture and the need to prepare especially for the qualitative sharpening of all the contradictions on a world scale.

Mao himself made links between the period of preparation in China and the whole world arena, and in doing so pointed to some things which we can learn from and utilize to deepen our understanding of the process that is central task, including its international dimension.

In particular, while discussing the Chinese revolutionary forces' military strategy, Mao wrote of fighting campaigns and battles in such a way as to attain "... our goal of strategic protractedness, which means *gaining time to increase our capacity to resist while hastening or awaiting changes in the international situation* and the internal collapse of the enemy, in order to be able to launch a strategic counter-offensive and drive the Japanese invaders out of China." ("Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War," SW, V. 2, p. 85) (emphasis added) In another essay on military strategy, Mao also wrote of the developing international situation, especially the worldwide popular movements and the Russian revolution which were factors supporting the struggle in China, and then went on to say, "Large-scale direct assistance is as yet lacking and will come only in the future, but China is progressive and is a big country, and these are the factors enabling her to *protract the war and to promote as well as await international help*." ("On Protracted War," SW, V. 2, p. 126) (emphasis added)

This idea of "promoting as well as awaiting" changes in the international situation provides a broader, international dimension for the important concept of "accumulating revolutionary strength" which was raised in the "General Line" polemic as a general task for the proletarian party in any country: "It (the party) should concentrate on the painstaking work of accumulating revolutionary strength, so that it will be ready to seize victory when the conditions for revolution are ripe..." ("A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement", Point 11, FLP, 1963, p. 22)

What should these observations of Mao's and the Chinese revolutionary practice tell us? For one thing that the revolutionary forces during periods of preparation have to engage the enemy in battle (even if that means *political* battle in our conditions now) and put a certain amount "on the line." (By "battle" we mean the class struggle in the all-around sense comprehended by our central task.) The oppositional, revolutionary pole needs to be out there in the field, even in order to assist in drawing others into political life. The experience of the revolutionary movement in any country shows this — remember the effect of the Panthers and their battles in the 1960s? The revolutionary forces cannot just be passive; they have to "promote as well as await" the changes in the world situation which will in turn provide the fundamental objective conditions for a qualitative leap in the revolution.

But at the same time as the revolutionary party must be far out and risking it in periods of preparation, still there has to be a sort of "string tied to our backs." There has to be a line between us and the broad masses (meaning mainly the politically aware ones) so that the revolutionary party and its forces can't be easily crushed like roving rebel bands. We have to be far out but — on that basis — build united fronts. This same principle also applies to a correct understanding of stages in the revolutionary process. We have to be far advanced, but we also have to know how to adjust, step back and pick up the broad masses (without, of course, being absolutely tied to majorities) in a revolutionary situation. Precisely the time when power is on the immediate agenda may be the time when, for example, we *might* not be able to say all the things about the Pope in our press that we have the freedom to say today. Such are the times when, as the Chairman has pointed out, the correct basic theme of "*Left-Wing Communism*" will be especially applicable — the tactics of how to win the broad masses through their own experience to the party's program in a period of revolutionary crisis. In re-reading "*Left-Wing Communism*" under those circumstances it will likely appear that Lenin will have gotten much smarter.

But overall, to accumulate revolutionary strength, you have to be way out on a limb or you will never be advancing things — advancing them toward the time when, due fundamentally to the working out of world contradictions (which of course include *revolutions* in the world), objective conditions ripen to the point where the prospects for seizing power open up.

This understanding of the accumulation of revolutionary strength and forces has application in every country although there are obviously differences in how this can be carried out in different types of countries. It links up this process with what is fundamental, the international dimension, and goes against the incorrect, linear view of accumulation that this process simply unfolds as a quantitative accumulation which proceeds to a certain point (based on conditions internal to the country) and then on that basis goes over to a qualitative leap.

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Attempting to generalize some experience from the Chinese revolution, one can learn quite a bit about this actual process. (This *can* be done, by the way, without falling into the errors we have criticized about absolutizing this experience or projecting it in a mechanical way into the world arena.) In fact a correct understanding of the Chinese revolution argues strongly against lines (which are often based on *mis*-interpretation of that revolution) which argue more for a linear, quantitative build up of forces or for various rightist schemes based on winning all the masses to your banner by being concerned with their well-being, etc.

In 1930, Mao wrote: "They [speaking of pessimistic comrades including Lin Biao — ed.] seem to think that, since the revolutionary high tide is still remote, it will be labor lost to attempt to establish political power by hard work. Instead, they want to extend our political influence through the easier method of roving guerrilla actions, and, once the masses throughout the country have been won over, or more or less won over, they want to launch a nation-wide armed insurrection which, with the participation of the Red Army, would become a great nation-wide revolution. Their theory that we must first win over the masses on a country-wide scale and in all regions and then establish political power does not accord with the actual state of the Chinese revolution." ("A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," *SW*, V. 1, p. 117) Abstracting this from the concrete conditions of China, there is a general understanding here which is of great value as a weapon against rightism and mainstream thinking. It is not necessary "first... to win over the masses on a country-wide scale" to begin serious revolutionary activity, nor is that really the goal of your activity during the preparatory period.

But on the other hand, it is not as if your revolutionary activity cannot and does not have influence over the broad masses under these circumstances. Particularly as the battle is joined the attention of these masses is drawn toward you and some will break away from the enemy camp. Mao wrote "... the fact that the Red Flag has never been lowered in the border area shows at once the strength of the Communist Party and the bankruptcy of the ruling classes, and this is of nation-wide political significance." ("The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains," *SW*, V. 1, p. 102)

To accomplish this, to accumulate strength and prepare for the opportunity for the seizure of power nation-wide, Mao and the Chinese revolutionary forces were very much "out on a limb." When Hoxha claimed that Mao's military theory was for an "endless" war "without perspective," Hoxha was being "patently absurd," as was so succinctly stated in *The Communist*. (See "Beat Back the Dogmatist-Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought," J. Werner, *The Communist*, No. 5, p. 12-14 for more on this.) Mao had a clear perspective (contrary to Hoxha's and Wang Ming's) that the revolution in China would take the form of a protracted people's war as the main form of struggle. It would be a war based in the countryside, which with the party's leadership could lead to victory in the new-democratic revolution as a stage in the struggle for socialism. *But* on the other hand, Mao never argued that the armed struggle should be begun only when there was the clear perspective of relatively quick victory — quite the contrary. In fact there was no such perspective when the armed struggle began in China. As Mao himself put it, "... the Red Army is small and weak. The Chinese Red Army, starting as guerrilla units, came into being after the defeat of the first great revolution. This occurred in a period of relative political and economic stability in the reactionary capitalist countries of the world as well as in a period of reaction in China." ("Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," *SW*, V. 1, p. 198) So the revolutionary forces under Mao's leadership engaged in a long period of preparatory work without the clear and immediate prospect of victory in which they were risking a lot, were outgunned and in a sense isolated.

(A sidepoint on the question of methodology: one of the valuable things about studying the experience of the Chinese revolution in this light is that it teaches materialism. The fact that you are examining a military struggle makes it quite clear that you are studying the material strength of opposing sides. Making the analogy between that struggle and our situation today helps make the same point clear. In our preparatory period the form of the struggle is political. But still what is expressed is the relative strength of both sides, even if that strength shows itself principally in the form of relative political influence over the broad masses. As was the case in China this too is ultimately determined by contradictions on the world level.)

In our situation, too, we must engage in active preparation for those great, revolutionary days in which, as Lenin said, twenty years are embodied. In this period of preparation we will not have, nor should we gear our tactics to having, a large section of the masses under our banner. (As the Chairman has pointed out, even in China when they had armed revolutionary regimes in the base areas and some of the spontaneity of nationalism going in their direction in the war against Japan, most of the time they did not have the majority under *their* banner, as opposed to that of the KMT or other bourgeois forces.) But while we will not have a large section under our banner in this period, neither can we fail to carry out really active all-around work including seizing on opportunities that do arise to influence broad sections, sometimes even exercising tactical leadership among them. In this regard, it is very important to seize upon "minor crises" of various sorts that arise internationally and domestically. These are often times that test our mettle and, more than that, open up broad avenues to expand our influence and forces. These periods are very important in training our party and the masses for the opportunities ahead.

It is definitely not the case that "just anything to await" the coming opportunities is fine. We are not awaiting a *deus ex machina* but are engaging in revolutionary struggle. First off, it would be perverting our correct analysis of world contradictions and their motion to hinge everything on awaiting "THE CONJUNCTURE." Our analysis (including our analysis of conjuncture) is far more dialectical than that. As the Chairman pointed out in his article "In Today's World Especially 'Slow Patient Work' Cannot Be Justified" (*RW* No. 107), periods of preparation in one country are periods of revolution in another. This is not just some moral warning to help us stiffen up our internationalism. Revolutions (or revolutionary struggles) that take place in periods which are overall preparatory periods on a world scale are not only important for the people in that particular country, but have influence on the material strength of world forces and on the sentiments of the masses worldwide. This can have a significant effect on the outcome when a world-historic conjuncture does arise.

It is also true as Mao pointed out that in war it is a question of preserving

oneself and destroying the enemy; and the latter is clearly principal overall in the process. Correctly understood, this idea of "promoting as well as awaiting" is an expression of this dialectical relationship. Understood in this way, one can see how the principles stressed in "Charting the Uncharted Course" are not at all contrary to this understanding, but are an essential part of it. In particular, there is great relevancy to Lenin's point that "... there are moments in history when a desperate struggle of the masses even in a hopeless cause is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle." For one thing, as we pointed out, such a struggle may not be *initiated* by the revolutionary party; and for another, such a struggle may make a big contribution to "hastening or awaiting" revolutionary developments internationally.

There is a correct, as well as an incorrect, way to "promote." And this brings us right back to the importance of the basic point here. It emphasizes the importance of grasping the whole process, of grasping for what and how the revolutionary force should be preparing and its profoundly international dimensions. As the "Basic Principles..." document puts it "... revolutionary crises can mature very rapidly and... communists must do everything possible to prepare for and accelerate developments toward such situations..." (para. 61, p. 12)

III. More Ideas on What it Means for Revolutionary Territory that is Seized to be Base Areas for the World Revolution (Taking Spiral Development into Account)

As "Conquer the World?..." sharply brought out, the existence of socialist countries in an imperialist-dominated world is an advance — but a tough problem. It is a problem that has been compounded by the phenomenon of lopsidedness in the world and by the fact that, so far, the socialist revolutions that have emerged from conjunctures have been in relatively backward countries. (Even though Russia was imperialist, still it was a backward imperialist country.) But even if there is revolution in one or more advanced countries in the coming period, this problem will not be eliminated. It will be around with us for quite some time.

To say that socialist countries must be base areas for the world revolution is not just an ideological stand; it has material meaning. In this regard, it is useful to explore the analogy between a (or several) socialist countries as base areas for the world revolution, and the experience in China of the establishment of base areas during the course of the revolution there. The analogy is not exact. In particular, it is important to keep in mind that the Chinese revolution in this period was a bourgeois-democratic one whereas in an overall way in this era the world revolution is the proletarian revolution. It is also important to remember that there are discrete processes within particular countries and thus to avoid falling into the error of treating things on a world level as basically extensions of phenomena within nations. But with these caveats, it is still useful to explore this analogy.

One basic point in common between base areas and socialist countries is the purpose of both: to serve as bases for expanding and conquering more. There is no other purpose apart from this. In "Pay Attention to the Day to Day Needs of the Masses — But Don't Overdo It!,"⁸ the Chairman made it clear that this was Mao's line on the relationship between tasks in the base areas and the war overall. And in *that* context it is necessary and correct to pay attention to the needs of the masses in the base areas and to making the transformations that can be made there in the production relations — again mainly to serve further advance and expansion.

Mao clearly understood this relationship between the base areas and the whole country — and that even their existence (while a necessary part of the strategy for winning nation-wide power) was fundamentally dependent upon the overall situation. He wrote "... whether it is possible for the people's political power in small areas to last depends on whether the nation-wide revolutionary situation continues to develop. If it does, then the small Red areas will undoubtedly last for a long time, and will, moreover, inevitably become one of the many forces for winning nation-wide political power. If the nation-wide revolutionary situation does not continue to develop but stagnates for a fairly long time, then it will be impossible for the small Red areas to last long." ("Why Is It that Red Political Power Can Exist in China?," *SW*, V. 1, p. 66) Relevant here is the idea raised in "Conquer the World?..." that there are limits on how far you can go in one country in carrying on socialist revolution and production without winning and transforming more of the world.

On a world level, there *have* been historically rather protracted periods between major revolutionary advances, periods of relative reactionary stability. It would be ridiculous and reactionary to argue that the socialist countries that exist in such periods should just give up (or alternatively engage in a rash advance, which would amount to the same thing). So it has been, and will be, necessary to engage in consolidation. And this is good — not bad — for the world revolution. The point raised in Section II about the significance of the continued existence of base areas for people throughout the country holds true about socialist countries on a world scale.

After you have "squeezed out" all you can from a period of revolutionary storms you have to consolidate. You have to prepare for the next advance, which includes backing up and paying attention to the livelihood of the masses, etc., so you do not unnecessarily lose what you've won. These are the periods when it may be necessary (depending fundamentally on the international situation at the time) to "bribe" some of the intermediate strata into working for socialism.

But again, maintaining all this is problematical. Over long periods of non-revolutionary times on an international level, and in the face of various material and ideological pressures, it is difficult to keep the middle forces with you. In summing up the coup in China, we noted some aspects of this problem. Mao speaks to this problem in regard to the base areas within China: "When the revolution is at a low ebb in the country as a whole, the most difficult problem in our areas is to keep a firm hold on the intermediate class." ("The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains," *SW*, V. 1, p. 88). But the problem is not isolated to the intermediate alone. Mao went on in the same essay to say, "Unless the splits and wars within the landlord class and among the warlords in China continue, and unless a nation-wide revolutionary situation develops, the small independent Red regimes will come

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under great economic pressure and it is doubtful whether they will be able to last. For not only is such economic strain intolerable to the intermediate class, but some day it will prove too much even for the workers, poor peasants and Red Army men." (p. 89)

Of course, here there are some differences between small base areas in China and whole countries — including in their ability to sustain and develop a relatively full economic life. But, fundamentally, including in the economic aspect, the analogy holds. This closely relates to the point raised by the Chairman, quoting Lenin, in "Reflections and Sketches" on the burden that rests on the advanced workers. But here, too, there is the other side of the coin: these advanced masses *can* carry quite a burden and, in fact, make a giant difference on a world scale. This is related to what the advanced masses within the socialist country must be prepared for, which is especially preparing to make the biggest contributions and sacrifices for the *world* revolution, including being prepared to risk-it-all in periods when that can make the difference in revolutionary advances internationally.

All this is opposed to a sort of "fortress socialism" approach, where the defense of the socialist country becomes the center of everything. There is a very real basis for this to set in, based on the necessary and important task of defending what has been won. The Chairman spoke to this problem, and some of the ideological and political results of it in his piece "Marxism as State Religion."¹⁰ Certainly, the proletarian forces within countries under bourgeois rule must make adjustments for the defense of the socialist countries; but, frankly, the main bending in this regard should be made by socialist countries for the overall advance of the world revolution.

Often the basis for this "fortress socialism" (and ultimately "state religion") outlook arises in periods of difficulty for the world revolution, when the socialist country or countries are "out there on their own" and facing real difficulties; however this has historically reached its heights (depths?) in periods of world conjuncture, when both the dangers and the opportunities for world advance are greatest. Particularly when one is rooted in the wrong political line on the relation of the socialist country's defense to the rest of the world revolution, it is easier to see the dangers than the opportunities. This political view tends to block vision. Mao wrote of a related problem in China: "Unable to see beyond their limited environment in the Fourth Army, a few comrades believe that no other revolutionary forces exist. Hence their extreme addiction to the idea of conserving strength and avoiding action. This is a remnant of opportunism." ("On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," *SW*, V. 1, p. 107)

Of course, it will not do to negate from *either* side the contradiction between the defense of the socialist countries and advancing the overall world revolution. Both are an objective part of the world revolutionary process. It is necessary to grasp the objective process of revolution on a world scale, in-

cluding the fact that in an overall way it proceeds in a spiral-like way and involves both consolidation and advance. What has been won *should* be defended, as one (subordinate) part of the overall tasks. Failure to see this will not eliminate the contradiction involved here, but from the opposite side, will turn it into an antagonism. Mao also criticized the putchist tendency in the Chinese Communist Party, one which regarded the situation in China as one of permanent upsurge. This is actually linked with the criticism made earlier (Section II) of the theory that in China they had to first win over the masses on a country-wide scale. Here, again, as with Trotskyism, the ultimate essential rightism of this theory is clear. On a world scale, too, while there have been and will be periods of giant upheaval when it may be possible to win a lot "at once," world contradictions are not in permanent upsurge either and (with the present level of imperialist development at least) it is not possible to win the whole world at once.

Of course, historically speaking, this has not been the main problem. And the correct relationship — what is principal — between the task of defense and advance on a world level must be upheld and struggled for. Mao wrote, "As far as the enemy is concerned, he is afraid to advance into our base area, but the main danger in his eyes is a Red Army that has driven into the White area." ("Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," *SW*, V. 1, p. 237). And, in general, one must constantly keep the sweeping view in mind, the vision of the future when it will be possible to, in a manner of speaking, go over to the strategic offensive on a world scale and indeed wipe out the enemy "resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely!"

¹¹"Conquer the World: The International Proletariat Must and Will," Bob Avakian, *Revolution*, Special Issue, No. 50, 1981.

¹²"If There Is To Be Revolution, There Must Be A Revolutionary Party" 1982.

¹³Chap. 9 of the Chairman's pamphlet on the party.

¹⁴"Communists Are Rebels: A Letter from RCP Chairman Bob Avakian To His Parents on Philosophy, Religion, Morals and Continuous Revolution," April, 1980.

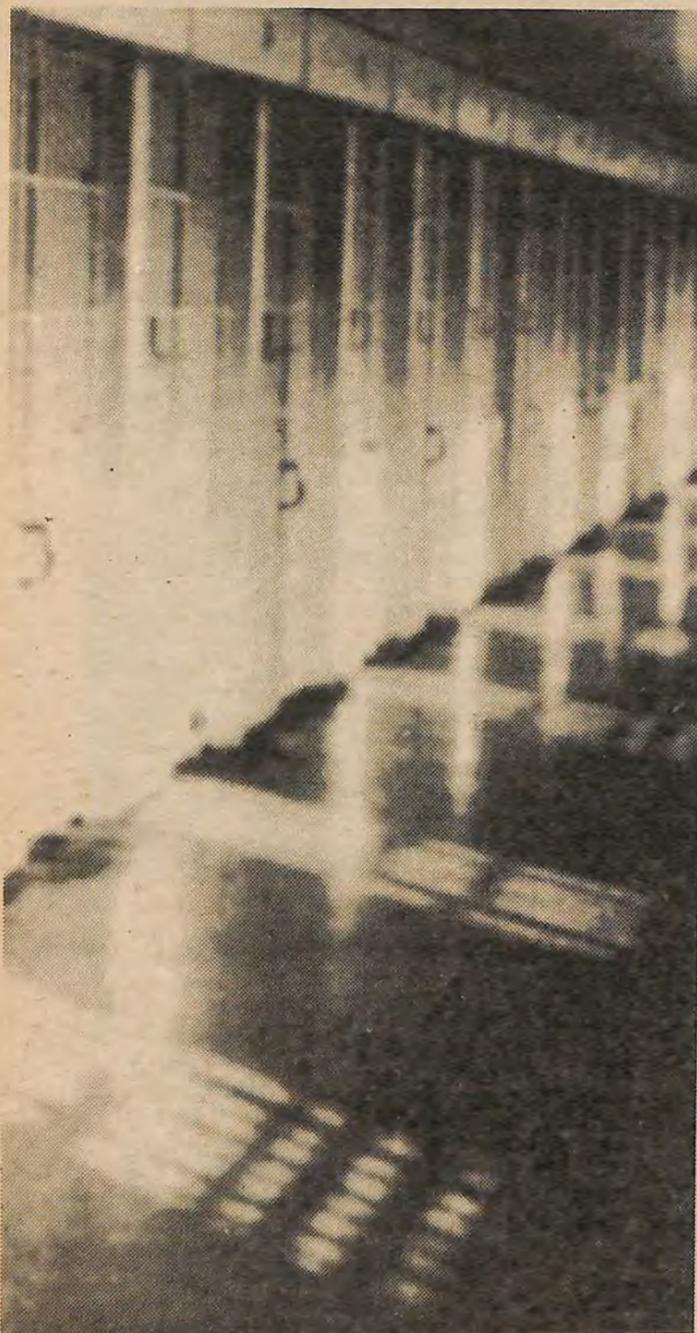
¹⁵"Coming From Behind To Make Revolution," Bob Avakian, 1980.

¹⁶Cited in "Charting the Uncharted Course: Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.!", a reprinted section of the 1980 CC Report, p. 13.

¹⁷"Basic Principles For the Unity of Marxist-Leninists and For the Line of the International Communist Movement," a draft position paper for discussion prepared by the RCP of Chile and the RCP, USA, 1981.

¹⁸Chap. 6 in the Chairman's pamphlet on the party.

¹⁹"Reflections and Sketches," a Series by Bob Avakian appearing in *RW* No. 170-186. ²⁰*RW* No. 179.



Shine the Light of Revolution Behind the Prison Walls

The Revolutionary Communist Party receives many letters and requests for literature from prisoners in the hell-hole torture chambers from Attica to San Quentin. There are thousands more brothers and sisters behind bars who have refused to be beaten down and corrupted in the dungeons of the capitalist class and who thirst for and need the *Revolutionary Worker* and other revolutionary literature. To help make possible getting the *Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party* as well as other Party literature and books on Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought behind the prison walls, the *Revolutionary Worker* is establishing a special fund. Contributions should be sent to:

Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund
Box 3486, Merchandise Mart
Chicago, IL 60654

Dear *RW*,

It is my most sincere concern that upon receipt of this missive it finds all comrades of *RW* in high revolutionary spirits as well as in the best of health... at this writing I'm in receipt of your recent communique, dated 2-19-83. It brings me to the attention of your major fundraising drive in order to keep the *Revolutionary Worker* circulation in these prison camps across this imperialist country. I will give my full cooperation to unite for this common effort. But as it stands right now with me, all I'm able to do from this segregated hole is try and get the word out by mail, because as for moneys I've been without it so long I can't remember what it's really used for. But really, I'll ask around this hole in Max A & B and hope to find someone who'll contribute to the Party's fundraising. Oh yeah, here's a few correspondence I'm getting at in concern to any contribution... This is just a few revolutionary minded people I know of that should be very interested in fundraising drive. I'll end this letter for now. And all of us brothers over here at S.Q. prison sends these revolutionary greetings and wishes your way. Also thanks for the reading material. We really need those books. It helped uplift many revolutionary minded brothers conscious of awareness. Thanks again...

Freedom

Dear Friends:

How are you all? First, let me say I have received some RCP newspapers and I like them a lot, but it just happens that I am leaving jail in a short while and I would like you to *stop* sending the paper, because perhaps I won't be at this address and likewise you could send it to those who have more time to serve behind bars and you can't imagine how one survives the days in these places. Thanks for sending the paper and for your cooperation.

Shine the Light of Revolution Behind the Prison Walls.

Sincerely,
C.M.
Dallas, PA.

(Translated from Spanish
by the *RW*.)

The following is excerpted from a letter received by Darnell Summers, a copy of which was forwarded to the Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund. Darnell is currently facing a railroad on trumped-up charges for the murder of a cop during a rebellion in Inkster, Michigan, 14 years ago.

Dear Darnell:

Before I explain the purpose of my correspondence, permit me to briefly retain your memory... we appeared in Inkster (which incidentally is my home and stomping ground too) Municipal Court... I was being held captive and consequently tried and convicted on a trumped-up charge. On both dates we communicated and reminisced at length.

However, recollection granted, and your undoubted observation as to my whereabouts, my purpose is in hope of obtaining and maintaining some line of communication, as well as, and perhaps more importantly so, a subscription to the RCP newspaper you mentioned. I am very impressed with your example. Also with what little I know of the RCP as of this writing. I need the address of the publisher of the RCP newspaper and, considering my situation here, hope that it will be provided at the earliest possible convenience. Hopefully, I will be able to work out something from here. Any and all information conveyed to me concerning the Party... will be embraced. I always knew that an RCP or a similar or like organization already existed or would eventually emerge among us. I only regret that as of this date I had nothing to do with its birth or growth.

P.S. We will win.

The Family — Looking Backward, and Looking Forward

“The woman is correctly called the soul of the family. Many of the finest human qualities are fostered within the family and the foundation of the personality laid.”

—From the Address of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, International Women's Day, 1982

“It must be remembered and affirmed that the family constitutes one of the most important terms of reference for shaping the social and ethical order of human work. The teaching of the church has always devoted special attention to this question. . . . In fact, the family is simultaneously a community made possible by work and the first school of work, within the home, for every person.”

—From the Third Encyclical of Pope John Paul II

“The family, which emerged in the last period of primitive communism, will in the future be abolished. It has a beginning and will come to an end. . . . Historically, the family was a production unit, a consumption unit, a unit for the procreation of the labour force of the next generation, and a unit for the education of children. Nowadays the workers do not regard the family as a unit of production; the peasants in the cooperatives have also largely changed, and peasant families are generally not units of production. They only engage in a certain amount of subsidiary production. As for the families of government workers and members of the armed forces, they produce even less; they have become merely units of consumption, and units for rearing and bringing up labour reserves, while the chief unit of education is the school. In short, the family may in the future become something which is unfavourable to the development of production. Under the present system of distribution of ‘to each according to his work,’ the family is still of use. When we reach the stage of the communist relationship of distribution of ‘to each according to his need,’ many of our concepts will change. After maybe a few thousand, or at the very least several hundred years, the family will disappear. Many of our comrades do not dare to think about these things. They are very narrow-minded. But problems such as the disappearance of classes and parties have already been discussed in the classics. This shows that the approach of Marx and Lenin was lofty, while ours is low.

Mao Tsetung, “Talks at Chengtu”, March 1958.

Correspondence on the RCP Fund Drive

Dear *RW*:

Please accept this \$25 contribution for your Party Fund Drive. I hope that it can be used in further delivering the message of Revolution, especially behind the walls of Amerika's dungeons. I am truly grateful for your lucid exposure of prison conditions through the testimony of those living within its torture chambers. The enclosed sum hardly puts a dent in the resources necessary to bring the *RW* into the hands of those desiring, but unable to pay for it. My resolve is to make a monthly contribution.

In Struggle
A Dallas reader

To the revolutionary comrades the world over, my most sincere greetings:

I came nearly five years ago to what many call “America.” Even though my native country, El Salvador, is part of the American continent, nevertheless we are not accepted as Americans. But, of course, the American rulers steal all that there is throughout the continent.

Of my nearly five years here, three were wasted. I worked hard, yes, very hard, washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms, washing windows — the

work that illegals do here. But what happened was that for three years I was depressed. I was looking for a way to get involved in political life, but my experience made it seem that my choice was either capital imperialist U.S., or social imperialist USSR, politics. It was a mess.

Soon after the death of my brother — he fell from the criminal bullets of the fascist Christian Democrat junta led by the “democrat” Duarte — I ran into sellers from the *Revolutionary Worker*.

At first I told them that I didn't want to know anything. But the comrades insisted on the importance of knowing and understanding what was happening in the world. They spoke of the struggles of the people of Angola; the struggles in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. They explained to me about the third line, of revolutionary internationalism directed to the international working class and based on the scientific analysis of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought.

I'm certain that there are thousands and thousands of comrades that feel disillusioned and confused because of the reverses the struggle has suffered in many parts of the world. But understand

this: there is, in the very heart of imperialism, a newspaper and a party that is genuinely Marxist-Leninist, that is giving leadership in preparing the masses of people for the seizure of power.

It is for this reason that it is very crucial to take up the call put out in the *Revolutionary Worker* to raise funds. This will enable revolutionary work to be carried on more widely among the masses of people here and elsewhere. A donation of \$50 will do a lot to get newspapers to comrades in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and other areas. It will be a joy to know that this paper is getting into the hands of these comrades around the world!

Forward with the fund drive!

— El Salvadoran revolutionary

My decision to contribute to the RCP Fund Drive, though it can only be a small amount financially, as I am on welfare, stems from my desire that the party succeed in its (our) goal — proletarian internationalist revolution in the U.S. and worldwide.

I met the party in a housing project, in 1979. We have been through many head-to-head struggles. Through personal and political struggle with (and

alongside) the RCP, I have gained precious insight into the workings of the world, and, however incomplete on my part, how revolution may be possible here, and relatively soon.

I know that without the party's work, and its influence on the advanced, my personal progress and the revolutionary trend as a whole, especially here in the U.S. would not be as deep or as high as it is even now. I urge others to contribute to the RCP Fund Drive so that the party will be able to greatly deepen and broaden this trend worldwide, so that in the future the majority of the people of the world will win!

A formerly confused proletarian

Dear *RW*,

I would like to show my support for the RCP and *RW* by contributing one day's wages (\$60) to the Fund Drive. I've also enclosed 20.00 and a request for “Introduction To The Science of Revolution” so I can deepen my study of Marxism.

Thank you,
A reader
Philadelphia

Taylor

Continued from page 3

Brown and Spivey, got into a scuffle with Chris Taylor when he tried to wrestle a gun from the two officers. As to the shooting and wounding of Chris Taylor, Lt. Wright contended that “the man only received an injury to his finger. If he were shot, it was the people in the house who did it. Our officers never fired a gun.” As to what happened inside the house, Wright described how “these Black subjects continually held and tortured the two officers cutting their clothes with knives and kicking them in the face and kicking them in the chest.” Speaking in the contemptuous and hysterical tones of an arrogant oppressor incensed and stunned by the resistance of the oppressed, Wright added, “They were like wild animals with its prey on the ground. Once they started there was no stopping them.”

When it comes to trying to cover up their brutality against Montgomery's Black community, the wild animals for whom Lt. Wright is speaking have a rich history. In 1976 Bernard Whitehurst was gunned down by Montgomery police. They claimed he brandished a gun at them. The subsequent investigation turned up the simple fact that the gun had been planted at the man's side after he had been shot down. The dirt and exposure from that investigation forced the mayor to resign and the police chief and eleven cops were fired. The last word on another investigation — where a Black police informant was shot down by police — has not yet been heard and it promises further insight into the workings of the Montgomery Police Department. None of this history nor the truth of what happened when the police attacked the Taylor house has made it into the press

accounts of this incident in the media around the country. Instead there have been vicious and lurid tales of “torture” by “wild animals” against a couple of friendly policemen. Instead there has been the outraged expressions of the rulers, angered and shaken by the fact that some Black people dare to defend themselves against a murderous assault. In these accounts, the crimes that have been committed against the Taylors and their friends, from the original attack to the beatings and arrests, are not yet enough. There are open and more subtle calls for more blood.

As news of the incident reached Pontiac, Michigan, anger swept through the Black community. Willie Taylor works at Pontiac's GM Truck and Coach plant. As a deacon in the local church he is widely known throughout the city. John Kennedy, another arrested relative, works as a barber at the family owned barber shop in Pontiac. In the words of one friend who knows the family, “People know this is a hoax and a straight up railroad.” Collections are being taken up at the plant where Willie works and at other spots around the city. Two guys collected \$300 on the street Wednesday and this is in a town with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country but a town where the masses have plenty of first hand experience with police attacks against Black people. Plans are being made to go out to the high schools and churches to raise more money and support for the family. One of Chris Taylor's friends put it like this, “You can't even bury the dead in peace. A bunch of Black people get together down there for anything from a basketball game to a funeral and they can't leave it alone they're so uptight.” And when Black people dare to stand up to the rulers' enforcers, it prompts the furious vengeance of the oppressors deeply fearful of the wrath of those they rule over. □

From the New Programme of the RCP

Continued from page 4

gling to break out of the confines of the home back into it. Attention will be paid to developing other methods of birth control in place of present ones which endanger women. The right to abortion will be guaranteed, and the capitalist policy of forced sterilization, directed against poor women and particularly women of the oppressed nationalities, will be stopped.

In order to further free the women from the narrow confines of household work, men must not only be struggled with to equally share the burden, but the proletariat will work step by step to establish and involve men and women alike in various institutions like collective laundries, kitchens and child care centers which will promote the gradual socialization of the task of raising children.

As far as the policy toward the family, it will be recognized for what it is: not some holy or sacred institution to be preserved for all time, but on the other hand an institution, that even under socialism, generally corresponds to the level of society, because of the fact that for some time there will still be remnants of capitalism including the need for commodity exchange, wages, etc., and for obtaining the bulk of necessities and many social services through this means. For this reason, the family will still play an important role in raising children. But not only will the family be a secondary form — even more so than under capitalism — for determining their upbringing, but its influence in

promoting conservatism among its members, especially the women and children, will be actively combatted. Their attention and energy will be focused on the broader questions and movements in society.

The right of divorce will be upheld — not to promote divorce, for in fact divorce will become less common than under capitalism — but to strengthen the free and voluntary character of marriage relations and relations between men and women in general. While the parents will still have significant responsibility for their children, this does not mean they are “theirs” and there will be struggle to prevent parents from imposing old values, and conservative, non-revolutionary thinking generally on the children.

The struggle around the women question will not be confined to any one sphere, but will go on throughout all of society. Revolution is impossible without the constant breaking with old ideas and old institutions, and the practices and values which promote the oppression of women are a key prop of the old; they must be a key target of the proletariat in destroying the old and creating the new. In any sphere, from employment to literature and art, this question will be raised and will be the source of ongoing struggle in order to ensure the full participation of women in the socialist society and the ongoing proletarian revolution and thereby immensely strengthen that revolution. □

One Month To Go!

MAJOR PARTY FUND DRIVE!



On March 31st, the Major Party Fund Drive will end. The significant and enthusiastic response to the call to raise funds for the party has been evident in the many diverse letters printed in the *RW* over the last two months. But to bring this drive to a victorious conclusion, we're calling on people to fully carry through and conclude their concentrated fundraising efforts, to make their individual contributions, and fulfill all pledges (to the greatest degree possible) by March 31st. As the original call for this fund Drive stated, "Many deeds cry out to be done. Large sums of money are needed to help strengthen the revolutionary communist trend internationally, to help build the party and deepen and spread the influence of its line into all the diverse streams of rebellion and protest; to further address the burning questions of our time, including in our party press; to counter the constant attacks by the state — in short to hasten the process of revolution worldwide." One important goal of this drive is to fund in their entirety major projects such as the *Introduction to SCIENCE OF REVOLUTION* book (\$10,000), the Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund (\$8,000) as well as underwrite special aspects of the publication and distribution (including internationally) of the *Revolutionary Worker*. For all those who recognize the importance of the party, its influence and work, your efforts in the next four weeks are crucial.

The following is a copy of a leaflet from a bookstore in Portland, Oregon which was sent out to hundreds of stores and individuals and posted broadly around town.

"Buy A Book — Make A Contribution"

Holland's Bookstore is happy to announce a day of financial solidarity with the RCP, on Saturday, March 12, 1983, when all money from the sale of books will be donated to the Party Fund Drive. Every other day of the year, income from the bookstore goes to the landlord, to the utility companies, to the U.S. government, and on and on. I feel privileged to set one day aside, during which this income can go to something of real value to the world's people. The store is stocked with a wide range of used books and will be open from noon until 6:30.

I have many serious disagreements with the party. RCP is willing to — even encourages — struggle around these criticisms, knowing that on the fundamental objective of making revolution in the interest of the international proletariat, we are united.

Any organization that puts itself out there the way the RCP does is going to make mistakes. A vanguard party that didn't make errors would not be a vanguard party. It's in summing up and making leaps off these errors that the concrete interests of the proletariat will be served. People waiting around for the perfect party to come along and sweep them off their feet don't understand how history works. RCP is an organization open to admitting errors and working through them. And it is an organization with the uncompromising strength that these times require.

The high level of exposure and analysis in the *RW*, growing off of the maturing line of the party, is itself a weapon of such importance in these "confusing" times that we should all feel privileged to be able to contribute toward its financial support. That RCP is consciously addressing the most urgent questions in this period — the necessity for international outlook, the nature of the Soviet Union, the importance of building a party, the threat of imperialist war, the potential for historic advances, etc. — and that it concretely engages in the process of making history is even more recommendation than any other organization on the "left" can claim.

So, buy a book, and make a contribution. □

Recently a small group of proletarians, university students, and professionals in one city got together with the RCP to discuss and contribute to the party's major fund drive. Over \$700 was raised in money and pledges that night and plans were made by several there for involving others in the fund drive. Throughout the evening, the discussion revolved around two major questions: the crucial importance of a vanguard organization and the role of the RCP today.

A youth from El Salvador put it this way. "When I was 12 years old in El Salvador, I remember looking at all the papers I could, trying to find out why people worked so hard but stayed so poor, trying to understand what was happening in other countries, and why it was so quiet in El Salvador. I remember wondering, what is the preparation for revolution, how do you get ready for really fighting imperialism? I think the principal problem with not having a strong basis in our line, having too much of an economist, when the armed struggle really broke out in El Salvador.

"We need to have a firm basis to really make revolution, because what is the future going to be like? No one knows exactly, but imperialism is not going to go away by itself. Problems are going to get sharper, and maybe soon, even here in the U.S. I often wish we had had a paper like this in El Salvador. People living in the U.S. have a special responsibility, we have to sustain the *RW* to advance the struggle internationally. This paper has meant a lot to me and my political development and I know it means a lot to other people all over the world, especially where revolutions are starting to develop."

An Ethiopian told of reading a book by an Italian revolutionary who described the proletariat in the U.S. as "dead and dormant," and added that while, at that time he certainly thought it was true, he also applied it to the Ethiopian masses, particularly the peasantry.

"I thought that 'dead and dormant' was appropriate for the Ethiopian peasants because of all that is religious, and superstitious, and backward about Ethiopia. I thought that with all that ignorance, all those centuries of ignorance, the Ethiopian peasant will be the last person on earth who is capable of becoming Marxist-Leninist. But when the revolution broke out and many of us went to the peasants, we were the ones who weren't sufficiently prepared. Things changed so fast, I've even seen priests become revolutionary warriors, become good revolutionary tacticians.

"The revolution advanced too much ahead of the revolutionary forces, we didn't have a party that was really Marxist-Leninist. And when we started printing a newspaper, the quantity in circulation was terrible, each copy had to go through 100 hands. But as things developed, we had to run off each issue three and four times to satisfy the needs of everyone who wanted to get a hold of it. In this country, I know they say it's democracy, really it's the bourgeoisie's dictatorship, but still you have an ability to print a newspaper like the *RW* that most people in the world don't have. That ability also carries a responsibility, to people not only here but in many other places. And so I think that we too have a responsibility, to contribute funds to see that this paper continues to be published and reach more people all the time."